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MAY 2001
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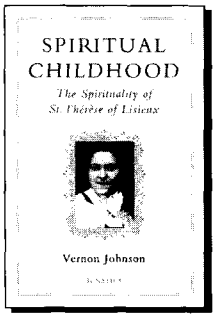

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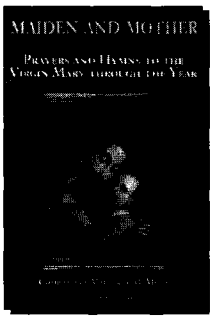

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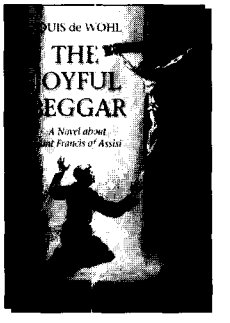

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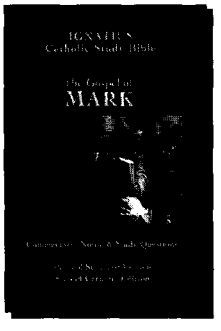

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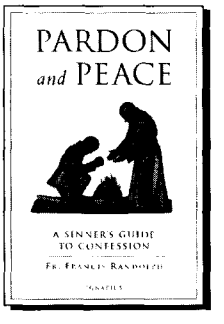

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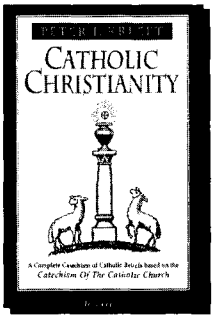
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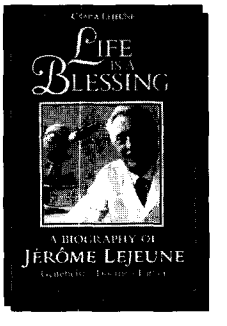

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FIRST THINGS

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The Meaning of Christian Unity

In "Who Really Cares About Christian Unity?" (January), Bruce D. Marshall holds up the Jansenists as models of fidelity both to truth as they saw it and to unity, since they never, for their part, broke communion with Rome, even as they denounced doctrinal decrees such as the bull *Unigenitus* on the basis of Scripture and St. Augustine.

Is it of any significance that a similar attitude animated the late Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre? And that it was Vatican II's ecumenism itself which he came to perceive as an error against the unity of the true Church? At any rate, while denouncing the errors of Vatican II on the basis of tradition and infallible acts of the magisterium, Lefebvre continued to name the Pope in the canon of the Mass, like the Jansenists, even after John Paul II declared his episcopal consecrations schismatic, consecrations Lefebvre conferred not in denial of papal jurisdiction per se, but due to a state of necessity.

When Professor Marshall speaks of the risen Christ being absent from his Church, but in such a way that the Church somehow perdures, his ecclesiology coincides with the thesis of another traditionalist, M.-L. Guerard des Lauriers, O.P. (d. 1988). Des Lauriers found certain Vatican II teachings in contradiction with the previous infallible magisterium of the Church. Studying the abundant theology of loss of papal office through heresy (see Robert Bellarmine for instance), he concluded that Paul VI must have lost his authority from Christ to teach and govern, since a pope would have been protected from promulgating such errors. But just as Prof. Marshall thinks the Church somehow perdures even though Christ has abandoned her, Guerard des Lauriers thought the papacy perdures *materialiter* while lacking the *forma* which is Christ in his giving of authority; regular elections provide a human and historical (material) continuity that will be revivified when in the future a pope shall be elected who will not teach the errors of Vatican II. In the meantime, the Church will perdure without actual papal authority, as when a pope has died.

God, the risen Christ, and the Holy Spirit abandoning the Church—ideas such as these were applied to the popes of Rome by the Byzantine "sedevacantist" cited (on Christian funerals) in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, St. Symeon of Thessalonika. The Savior had abandoned the heretical popes according to this monk-bishop, who wrote, "Let [the Latins] only show that the pope perseveres in the faith of Peter . . . and we will obey him not only as Peter, but as if he were the Savior himself. But if he is not the inheritor of the faith of the saints, then he will not be the inheritor of the Chair of Peter either."

Prof. Marshall pleads for divided churches to each acknowledge their incompleteness within one Body of Christ and to repent. But this "above it all" ecumenism is itself one of the divided positions within Christendom—witness the recent Russian Orthodox declaration identifying the Church with Orthodoxy. And Catholics would hope that Prof. Marshall might make his own the prayer of the twelve-year-old Elisabeth Heselblad, recently beatified convert and refoundress of the Brigittines: "Lord, show me which of these churches is the true Church, the one fold under one shepherd where you want us all to be."

Br. Ansgar Santogrossi, OSB
Mount Angel Seminary
St. Benedict, Oregon

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Given the many failed attempts by the Church in the century just concluded to foster, facilitate, manufacture, and negotiate its way toward Christian unity, one can empathize with the ecumenical burden expressed in Bruce D. Marshall's thoughtful essay "Who Really Cares About Christian Unity?"

Indeed, it is legitimate to argue, as Professor Marshall does, that the sort of ecumenism we have practiced has "failed because God wants it to fail"—legitimate, that is, to the extent that these attempts issue out of negotiation and human vision rather than inspiration of the Spirit and the heart of God. Truer words have never been spoken in an ecclesiastical context than the author's observation that "officially sponsored ecumenism is not so much an affront to traditional denominational sensibilities as an irrelevance that keeps getting in the way." And I agree that for anyone who cares at all about Christian unity, the fact of separated communions, despite our best ecumenical energies, is "a hard and bitter pill." But from precisely what does this bitterness derive? Should that elusive unity in the end be predicated, as Prof. Marshall believes, on "eucharistic unity"?

That a "eucharistic" notion of unity is too tenuous a criterion for Christian unity would seem to grow apparent from a cursory glance at the Church's history. Forget the Reformation divide, which is the primary line of demarcation for the author. If the Church's unity consists, more narrowly, in a common eucharistic life, then there has been no Christian unity for almost a millennium—i.e., since 1054.

The text of 1 Corinthians 10 and 11, material adduced by the author as support for eucharistic unity, loses its weight in light of its function in 1 Corinthians. Issues treated by St. Paul in chapters 10 through 14 of 1 Corinthians concern corporate worship by the congregation when it is assembled; Corinthian issues are inherently intra-community issues. The unity of Christ's Church in its universal manifestation, by contrast, is a theme of Paul's letter to the Ephesians. Hence, a case for Christian unity must proceed from the relationship between the Head of the Church and the members of the Church, as Ephesians 4 delineates it.

Christian unity, in its cosmic dimensions, is both a confessional reality ("I believe . . . ") as well as an ideal for prayerful pursuit (cf. John 17). The same epistle to the Ephesians acknowledges both elements; the confession of existing unity—"There is one body" (Ephesians 4:4)—is linked to the following imperative to strive for a visibly manifested unity—"until all of us come to the unity of the faith . . . to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ" (Ephesians 4:11-13).

In the conclusion of his essay, Prof. Marshall comes tantalizingly close to identifying baptismal unity as that which authentically unites all Christians. But alas, baptism is seen to be deficient, insofar as it unites us "with the dead Christ, deposed from his cross and ready for the tomb." For theological reasons, then, I must respectfully take issue with Prof. Marshall's understanding of baptism. Romans 6:5, which is cited by the author to emphasize the Christian's unity with Christ's death in baptism, follows on the heels of St. Paul's two-pronged theological affirmation: "Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4). Thus can the Apostle Peter write: "And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you . . . through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 3:21). In baptism we are united not merely with Christ's death but also with his resurrection. This resurrection has both future and present implications—a duality that is repeated again in Romans 8.

Hence, applauding Prof. Marshall's yearning for unity, Christians may appeal not merely to a "eucharistic" basis but also to a baptismal—or a broadly sacramental—basis for unity as we prayerfully heed our Lord's command to manifest visible oneness. After all, the sacraments as a whole—not the Lord's Supper alone—must be understood to constitute a "mark" of the Church and thus identify authentic followers of Christ at all times and in all places.

J. Daryl Charles
Taylor University
Muncie, Indiana

I read with interest "Who Really Cares About Christian Unity?" by Bruce D. Marshall. However, I was disturbed by Professor Marshall's reliance upon Israel's divided kingdom as an analogy about the divisions in the Church signifying God's abandonment and portending His judgment.

This assumes the Davidic Kingdom with its centralized rule as a model. God's ideal had been forsaken during the time of the prophet Samuel. Israel, prior to King Saul, had almost no civil or religious centralization. The diversity of the twelve tribes might be a better comparison, rather than formal union under one person. If that is true, the situation is not nearly as dire as Prof. Marshall suggests.

Henry T. Barton
Corona, California

Bruce D. Marshall replies:

Almost instinctively, we Christians try to subdue the threat to our life posed by our own divisions. Br. Santogrossi seems to see no problem here. Those who find themselves at odds with the one true Church over what the gospel requires (Protestants, Jansenists, or whatever) are simply Lefebvrite schismatics, who need to get into (or back into) this one Church. As claimants to the title of the (or a) true Church now generally recognize, though, the chief premise of this suggestion is simply

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false. There is division of the true Church and not simply division from it. However much the true Church may subsist in the Church of Rome, for example, according to the teaching of Vatican II (with which people like Lefebvre and des Lauriers mistakenly disagreed), even those who find themselves outside the Roman eucharistic communion may have a genuine, if imperfect, share in the life and reality of the true Church. The divided eucharist wounds all who are party to it—it wounds the true Church as a whole, and no one is above it. The advice that we seek the true Church is therefore of no help at all. The one true Church doesn't deliver us from disunity, but drops us right in the middle of it.

Daryl Charles incorrectly supposes that I share his contempt for modern ecumenism; he mistakes my description of the sentiments of others for my own opinion. Officially sponsored ecumenism has failed not because of the spiritual poverty of ecumenists, but because of the spiritual poverty of the churches they represent, whose profound desire to remain divided ecumenism has not been able effectively to escape.

Whatever his attitude toward recent ecumenism, Professor Charles apparently accepts one of its basic premises: that baptism is enough to unite the Church, and we can build on it in order to reach eucharistic unity. At least as Prof. Charles conceives it, this suggestion is exegetically implausible. Paul obviously doesn't regard Corinthian eucharistic factionalism as a merely local problem; the divided Corinthians "show contempt for the Church of God" (1 Corinthians 11:22), and not simply for the congregation at Corinth. Still less, as ecumenists have long rightly understood, can we treat the unity for which Christ prays in John 17 merely as a distant hope, since its absence entitles the world to reject the gospel.

But even if this attempt to manage division were exegetically sound, it has the disadvantage of unreality: it simply seems not to have worked. As John Henry Newman observes on a not wholly unrelated matter, "Were it not for matter of fact, the theory would be great indeed; it would be irresistible, if it were only true." Of course baptism promises a share in Christ's resurrection according to Romans 6:3-6, just as it even now gives us a share in his death. But how the Church will get from one end of baptism to the other—the present significance, as Prof. Charles observes, of the baptismal promise that we will rise with Christ—is not settled by the certainty that this promise cannot fail. Whether the Church's way to the resurrection leads through its own death will depend on whether the Church can repent of its divisions—can actually walk in newness of life. Of that, alas, there is very little sign indeed.

The Religion and Politics of the Evangelicals

As an evangelical, I read George McKenna's "How the Evangelicals Saved America" (February) with a great deal of interest, but I take issue with the following propositions: 1) that there was a large gap between the religion of the evangelical masses and the politics of the Whigs; 2) that evangelicalism is chiefly experiential, without rituals and dogmas; 3) that Methodism was originally a "big tent" religion.

While the evangelical masses certainly did not share the deism of Jefferson and Paine, their religion had a lot to do with the ideals of consent of the governed and the political supremacy of law over the officeholder. The bulk of believing Americans during the eighteenth century were of the Reformed persuasion (a.k.a. Calvinists). Their British and European forebears had already produced a tradition of political theory, exemplified by such authors as John Knox, Christopher Goodman, John Ponet, Theodore de Beze, Francois Hotman, Johannes Althusius, Samuel Rutherford, and others. These writers all derived governments from the consent of the governed, subjected the ruler to law, and affirmed a right of resistance. The classical catechism of Anglophone Calvinism, the Westminster Larger Catechism (1647-49), devotes more space in its exposition of the Fifth Commandment (fourth to Lutherans and Roman Catholics) to the sins of superiors (parents, masters, rulers) than to the sins of inferiors (children, servants, citizens). Perhaps one reason why these people were open to the political ideas of the Whigs was that they sensed a kinship between Whiggery and their own tradition of political thought and organization.

The various shades of evangelicalism, from classical Calvinism to Pentecostalism, all have their distinctive doctrines, some of which are fiercely cherished (consider how differing interpretations of saving faith and the meaning of adult immersion keep Baptists and Campbellites separate to the present day). The doctrine of justification by faith was a staple of the biblical Christianity preached by such stalwarts as Edwards, Whitefield, Tennent, Freylinghausen, and others. Similarly, the Wesley brothers had fallings out with Whitefield and Toplady over predestination. Most evangelicals also looked askance at the anti-Trinitarianism sweeping eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century New England. And, I dare say, if "walking the sawdust trail" isn't a ritual, what is?

I agree, however, that there was a tendency, at least after the Second Great Awakening, to stress experience over doctrine. And this raises a further problem in the thesis that evangelicalism "saved" America. Looked at closely, this experientialism is not too far from the radically anti-doctrinal stance of liberalism—which represents the self-destruction of American Protestantism and its laying society wide open to all the baleful idiocies against which FIRST THINGS so eloquently protests. I can't

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help but note that apart from the last, crumbling bastions of hard-core confessional Lutheranism and Calvinism, American evangelicalism also has its voices calling for "openness" to the sexual revolution, radical feminism, goddess worship, and Third Worldism (full speed ahead to 1968).

Early Methodism's harsh attitude towards Calvinism and Calvinists is scarcely "big tent." (Lincoln's birth among Primitive Baptists and his wife's association with Old School Presbyterianism may have prompted the Methodist Peter Cartwright's charging him with being an infidel.)

If the evangelicals "saved" America, it was because their preservation of historic Christianity in larger or smaller doses served as the social leaven that once leavened the whole lump of the republic.

Peter J. Herz
Carbondale, Illinois

George McKenna replies:
I just read over my article and am trying to figure out why Peter Herz thinks I argued that "there was a large gap between the religion of the evangelical masses and the politics of the Whigs." There is not a word to that effect in the article, and in other recent writings I have discussed at length the ties between the evangelicals and the Whig Party.

His other criticisms also seem to be based on misunderstandings. When I spoke of early American Methodism as a "big tent" religion I did not mean that it did not differ theologically from Calvinism but that "it welcomed blacks and women into its ranks, and even elevated some to leadership positions." It was a demographic big tent. Even so, as the nineteenth century progressed, the doctrinal differences among evangelicals began to melt away, and here Mr. Herz apparently agrees with me. It's just that he doesn't like what he considers the post-1968 effects of the meltdown: "the sexual revolution, radical feminism, goddess worship, and Third Worldism." This of course is entirely beyond the scope of my article, which was about the beneficent social effects of evangelical religion in the early years of the nineteenth century. Here again, Mr. Herz and I seem to be in substantial agreement: he observes, correctly I think, that the evangelicals' Christianity "served as the social leaven that once leavened the whole lump of the republic."

As for the meaning of "ritual," the misunderstanding may be mutual. As a Catholic I tend to think of it as something more formal, structured, and deeply rooted in liturgical tradition than "walking the sawdust trail." But that may be too narrow a definition.

Mere Lutheranism

I found myself nodding in agreement as I read Matthew Rose's "Unremarkably Lutheran" (February). I think he has it right about us Lutherans in practically every respect.

It is worth pointing out that those whose sane phrases Mr. Rose borrows and cites are not themselves Lutherans. May we indeed claim Hans Urs von Balthasar, Reinhold Niebuhr, Falstaff, Josef Pieper, Henry Adams, Edward Burke, and the inestimable Dr. Johnson as "anonymous Lutherans"?

What Mr. Rose calls Lutheran irony and Lutheran composure are true and shared as a stance toward human life in the world, because they tap into something more than mere Lutheranism. Lutherans do not seek to establish a distinctive identity, but want to remain "mere Christians." Lutheran irony reflects nothing less than Christian realism. Lutheran composure arises, I suggest, from the merely Christian distinction between the certainty and clarity of our status *coram Deo*, and the ambiguity and contingency of our existence in the world.

Not very remarkable, perhaps, but true. And very, very Lutheran.

William W. Schumacher
Department of Historical Theology
Concordia Seminary
St. Louis, Missouri

Bush v. Gore and Judicial Usurpation

Shame on FIRST THINGS. I thought that if any conservative voice would set aside political expediency and squarely face the logic and implications of *Bush v. Gore* it would be yours. Alas, all we got from Richard John Neuhaus ("The Two Politics of Election 2000") and James Nuechterlein ("Winning Semi-Ugly") in your February issue was spin, the same warmed-over talking points repeated by conservative flacks on the chat shows. There are four such talking points, all of them disingenuous.

First, avoid any mention of the equal protection arguments actually made in the Supreme Court's opinion, arguments that sound remarkably like liberal expansionist/activist interpretations of the Fourteenth Amendment (although these are usually made on behalf of folks the Amendment was actually intended to protect rather than presidential candidates). I realize the Court does not really want anyone to read its opinion—it fell back on a *per curiam* form, and the two swing justices refused to affix their names to any part of it—but it may be worth a look in light of the right's judicial arguments over the last few decades.

Second, make the absurd claim that the decision actually opposes judicial activism by checking an out-of-control Florida Supreme Court. Thank goodness the federal courts are ready to step in and tell us what state election laws actually require when state courts don't produce the interpretations federal judges think appropriate. If using transparently flimsy reasoning to take over a political process properly settled by a) the voters of Florida, acting under laws passed by b) the Florida legislature, including contest provisions empowering c) the Florida courts to oversee recounts, leaving any final Electoral College disputes to settlement in d) the United States Congress is a way of resisting judicial activism,

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then the cure looks strikingly like the disease.

Third, argue that the U.S. Supreme Court was correct to stop the Florida courts from trying "to change election laws after the election." Never mind the legitimate issue of when interpreting laws becomes "changing" them (usually at the point we don't like the interpretation). This argument is actually one set aside by the majority of the Court, but it nicely deflects attention from the equal protection arguments that they did use.

Fourth, just as Clinton tried to shift the apparently plain meaning of the word "is," shift an apparently clear 5-4 vote to a much more comforting 7-2 one. Usually, the vocal presence of four *dissenting* justices makes this impossible, but it's worth a try.

The conservative obfuscation concerning *Bush v. Gore* is unfortunate. At the very least, a closer examination would solve a mystery troubling the right for some time now. Why, conservatives ask, do black voters insist on staying loyal to a liberal camp that takes them for granted and offers nothing but hollow rhetoric and failed social programs? Why don't black voters respond to the right's message of cultural conservatism, economic opportunity, and individual responsibility? Why, in short, don't black voters trust the right? Let no conservative ever ask such questions again. *Bush v. Gore* has answered them.

Black Americans know that when push comes to shove they still can't trust the right—not even to stay faithful to its own principles. The five (yes, only five) majority justices in *Bush v. Gore* have proven so again, and your journal's silently rolling over in the face of the Court's decision has done nothing to change that impression. Shame.

David Carroll Cochran
Assistant Professor of Politics
Loras College
Dubuque, Iowa

James Nuechterlein defends the Supreme Court's decision in *Bush v. Gore* as "the least messy solution available" to avoid what might otherwise have evolved into a constitutional crisis. That's a plausible reading of what happened.

How did we end up in such dire straits? Mr. Nuechterlein places the entire blame on the Florida Supreme Court, which "prolonged" the recount in an effort to ensure a final result consistent with voter intent. But what are we to make of the role of the Florida legislature, which resolved to select Republican electors even if Mr. Bush received fewer votes than Mr. Gore? Mr. Nuechterlein passed over that aspect entirely because the legislature, as he put it, "was constitutionally charged with selecting [Florida's] electors."

So the prudential judgment of a closely divided court in a case of first impression brings us to the edge of disaster while the contempt of a legislative majority for our democratic traditions is of no consequence? It's that kind of tortured logic that has left me feeling more like a Democrat these past several months than at any time in recent memory.

Berry Friesen
Lancaster, Pennsylvania

I am very disappointed in FIRST THINGS' response to the U.S. Supreme Court's *Bush v. Gore* decision, which effectively decided the presidential election. James Nuechterlein called it "far from indefensible," while Richard John Neuhaus opined that the decision was "the right one." Not so very long ago, FIRST THINGS came close to advocating civil disobedience in response to court decisions that were not nearly as egregious an expansion of federal judicial power at the expense of citizens and the several states. The immediate intent of the decision may arguably have been to rein in an out-of-control state court. However, the expansive (to say the least) view of the equal protection clause relied on by Chief Justice William Rehnquist and his colleagues insures that the decision will be cited as precedent by judicial activists seeking to have federal courts impose their views on states and localities.

In order to understand how they could support such a decision, I would appreciate answers from Mr. Nuechterlein and/or Father Neuhaus to two counterfactual questions. First, if the facts had been reversed and the Gore campaign had been seeking to reverse the Florida court, do they honestly think that Justices Rehnquist, Antonin Scalia, Clarence Thomas and the rest of the majority would have used the same equal protection arguments and reached the same conclusion, stopping the recount and giving Gore the presidency? Secondly, if the facts had been reversed and a liberal majority of the Court, using the same equal protection arguments, had given Gore the presidency, would they have supported the decision, or would they have condemned it as the latest example of the judicial usurpation of political power?

Jack Patkus
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

I am saddened by your editorial estimate of the 2000 election. Whether I was correct or not, I judged for years that FIRST THINGS represented a credible conservative voice given to engaging the "culture wars" with integrity. Now I fear that you have become just another partisan warrior for whom credibility and legitimacy are less important than victory.

I respected your willingness a few years ago to raise the difficult subject of a "judicial usurpation" of our democracy. In the face of the invective and vituperation of your critics, you placed before us the possibility that our government was increasingly a "judicial oligarchy," a "regime" no longer grounded in the consent of the governed. Russell Hittinger wrote, "Since the political common good depends on no branch of government taking more than its share of authority, obedience [should] not be given to an act that violates the

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foundation of the rule of law" ("The End of Democracy?" FT, November 1996). At this latest moment when the Supreme Courts of both Florida and the United States overreached by acting in violation of the constitutional prescription of legislative remedy in electoral matters, the best that you seem to be able to argue is that the wrong of the lower court justified the wrong of the higher. But Hittinger's point remains: Why should we obey "an act that violates the foundation of the rule of law"? Why should we consent to the illegal appointment of this President? Because "conservatives" did the deed?

Gordon Scoville
Newton, Kansas

RJN replies:
Before and after the election outcome was determined by the U.S. Supreme Court's intervening to prevent the Florida Supreme Court from rewriting the election laws, James Nuechterlein and I were agreed that, had Mr. Gore prevailed by the laws in force on election day, or even by the changes imposed by the Florida court somehow resulting in his winning a majority in the electoral college, he should be recognized as the legitimate President. We make no secret of the fact that we are glad that did not happen. But our devotion to the rule of law, and therefore against the judicial usurpation of politics, has in no way been compromised by partisan interest.

James Nuechterlein replies:
In "Winning Semi-Ugly," I argued essentially that the U.S. Supreme Court majority had excellent prudential reasons, and defensible (if arguable) constitutional reasons, for ruling as it did in *Bush v. Gore.* I therefore do not consider the decision an act of judicial usurpation. As I said, "Not every active use of the Supreme Court's authority constitutes an exercise in judicial activism." Most of the points raised by my critics I dealt with in the original article, and I will not burden readers by repeating what I said there.

One matter I did not address was the majority's reliance, in part, on the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. That indeed could be used by a Court so inclined to vastly expand the Court's role in interpreting state election laws. But as a number of observers have noted, the majority, aware of that danger, said in effect that this was a narrow decision addressed to a unique set of circumstances and therefore not a basis for a wholesale expansion of the Court's power. The majority understood, in other words, that hard cases make bad law—and acted accordingly.

Anti-Judaism and Anti-Christianity

With regret I write to say that I will not be taking up the recent invitation I received to renew my subscription at a generous rate. The reason is what I find to be the appalling remark by Richard John Neuhaus, in an effort to "balance" the acknowledgment of a "long history of Christian anti-Judaism" that "was exploited by the Nazis," that "there was also a long history of Jewish anti-Christian hostility" (While We're At It, February).

What can the latter term possibly mean? Does the sheer refusal of Jews to regard the Christian religion as true merit comparison to the long history of Christian pogroms against the Jews? Nor is the "long history of Christian violence against Jews" that you go on to acknowledge balanced, as you imply, by the "long history of Christian peoples providing refuge, albeit often insecure refuge, for Jews": against what was the refuge being provided except the persecution by other Christians? Should Jews therefore feel grateful to Christianity, as distinguished from individual Christians, for that occasional refuge? Surely your statement that "since Christians were primarily in charge, Christians bear more responsibility than Jews for how [their relations] did turn out" severely understates the matter as well.

I applaud your concluding acknowledgment "that Christians, and . . . Christianity, bear a large measure of responsibility" for the rise of Hitler and the Holocaust. But the remarkable qualifications of this acknowledgment quoted above so weaken the acknowledgment as to render it in my judgment embarrassing and even offensive.

David L. Schaefer
Professor of Political Science
Holy Cross College
Worcester, Massachusetts

RJN replies:
My comment no doubt runs against the grain of the achingly correct line reinforced by, for instance, James Carroll's recently published *Constantine's Sword* (see review elsewhere in this issue), which depicts two millennia of Jewish-Christian relations in terms of the unremitting persecution of Jews by Christians. The history is a great deal more complicated than that, beginning with the apostolic era and continuing for centuries. See, for example, Robert Louis Wilken's *John Chrysostom and the Jews,* which describes the ways in which Christians reacted to a large and very hostile Jewish community of the time. True, Christian refuge was provided against other Christians, but also, and very importantly, against Muslim rulers. (See *The Decline of Eastern Christianity under Islam: From Jihad to Dhimmitude* by Bat Ye'or.) In retrospect of the Holocaust it is very easy to forget this history. With respect to that unspeakable catastrophe, and contra Professor Schaefer's misreading, I did not intend and did not suggest a symmetry of moral responsibility between Jews and Christians.

Procedure and Substance

I write this letter to take issue with a small, yet significant, point Richard

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John Neuhaus makes about the recent decision of Duke University to permit the blessing of same-sex unions in Duke Chapel ("When Tolerance is Trump," Public Square, February). Father Neuhaus cites Stanley Hauerwas for the proposition that "in contemporary liberalism the procedural overrides the substantive, and compromise in the name of tolerance displaces the deliberation of truth." A more appropriate statement might be that today's hard left permits the procedural to override the substantive, but only in the service of achieving the desired substantive end.

Leftists are quite willing to disregard the procedural when it suits them. This has been on display most prominently in the last several years with the investigations surrounding former President Clinton. Each time a duly qualified official sought to conduct an investigation of a Clinton scandal using "an appropriate process," the left demonstrated its contempt for the procedural by obstructing and otherwise diverting the investigation at every turn. Thus, we were treated to the transformation of a serious inquiry about potential perjury and obstruction of justice by the President into a sideshow about whether an investigation into the President's sexual behavior was appropriate. Once the inquiry could be portrayed as a systematic violation of the President's privacy, facts and law became irrelevant and the investigation was doomed.

Once we accede to the left's definition of the terms of debate, the debate is over and we have lost. The "appropriate process" was rigged from the start. Permitting the blessing of same-sex unions was not a compromise in the name of tolerance; it was the end sought to be achieved, as one more front in the war on traditional values. No process which achieves a result that undermines an institution's fundamental principles could ever be called "appropriate."

Benjamin E. Landon
South Williamsport, Pennsylvania

A Failure to Communicate

"When Bishops Speak" (Public Square, February) speaks clearly about the need to improve communications between the bishops and the laity in the Catholic Church. Never has there been a time when the bishops' guidance was so essential to cut through the deliberate and unintentional obfuscation of moral issues in what passes for public debate today.

Yet from my lay perspective, our shepherds frequently fail to connect with and energize the members of the Church. I believe there are two principal causes for this failure to communicate.

First, the positions of the U.S. Catholic Church often seem to be driven by political considerations. "When Bishops Speak" sheds some needed light on the narrow path the bishops walk between politicization of the pulpit and moral guidance. The obligation to be shepherds of all the faithful clearly argues against the partisan positions and endorsements practiced in some churches. However, that same obligation would seem to argue against temerity toward the IRS or a lack of forcefulness when addressing moral issues. Our young people ask, "What Would Jesus Do?" and perhaps the bishops should ask their advisers the same question.

Second, instead of speaking in terms of moral principles, the bishops tend to speak in terms of specific legislative programs and positions, often raising questions about their own credibility. The inappropriate pastoral letters mentioned in "When Bishops Speak" are good examples of the problem. Specific guidance may have been required for an uneducated Church years ago, but now the Church needs to also speak to an educated laity. Outlining clear principles instead of specific positions could energize the laity to apply their collective knowledge and experience to some of the tough moral issues of our day. Instead, the laity often feel patronized instead of energized.

W. R. Watts
Crockett, Virginia

Superficial Judgment

The brief review of Eugenio Corti's *The Red Horse* (Briefly Noted, February) was rather superficial.

The autobiographical nature of the book makes it extremely valuable. Corti himself experienced what he writes about. This is World War II history "up close and personal."

Another aspect of the book, sadly to a great extent now also history, is the morality possessed by many of the characters. They speak to us of a more idealistic life, encompassing respect, fidelity, and selflessness.

Occasionally, "literary judgment" should bow to works of such substance and we should cherish their authors while they are still with us.

Mary I. Pasciutti
Beltsville, Maryland

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THIS TIME

Pride and Patriotism

James Nuechterlein

A great many Americans, especially those of a certain age, cannot hear the German language being spoken—by anyone under any conditions—without instantly bringing to mind Hitler, the Nazis, the Holocaust. It's not willed; it's simply instinct. I share in that even as one whose name announces his German origins and who, in fact, has nothing but German forebears on all branches of the family tree as far back as anyone has been able to trace. (Though, as I mentioned last month, my parents chose not to teach their children German nor to have them regard themselves as German. As a small child during World War II, I experienced no ambivalence when with my toy gun I mercilessly mowed down Nazis by the score.) For people of my generation, the identification of Germany with the Nazi experience is ineradicable and near absolute. More than a half century after the collapse of the Third Reich, a special moral burden rests on Germany and things Germanic.

The question is, When if ever does the statute of limitations run out on that moral burden? For Nazism itself, of course, the answer is Never. There can never be anything faintly resembling a Romance of the Lost Cause for Hitler's regime. Nor can people in Germany who were of age in those years entirely escape the burden, with the exception of those relative few who actively opposed the Nazis. One does not have to share Daniel Goldhagen's crude moral notion that the whole German people were "willing accomplices" to Hitler's genocidal madness to recognize the varying degrees of moral complicity not only among the Hitler enthusiasts but also among the many German citizens who merely "went along" with the Nazis and who chose not to see what they did not want to see.

The German people themselves, of course, are intensely aware of all this. The greater part of postwar German history, especially in the west, has been about coming to grips with the Nazi legacy. But the question increasingly intrudes, Does this coming to grips never have an end? There are not that many Germans left, after all, who were adults during the Third Reich. If you turned eighteen in 1933, when Hitler came to power, you are today eighty-six; even if you turned eighteen as late as 1945, when Hitler died by suicide and the Nazi regime collapsed, you are today seventy-four. The Germans alive during the Nazi years are dying off. Their successors have built a liberal democratic society that is economically dynamic and culturally vibrant. The issue is whether today's Germans can get out from under the nation's burden of guilt and begin to feel something like the normal patriotic pride toward their country that citizens of other nations experience.

Not surprisingly, the question divides the nation. As reported in the *New York Times*, Johannes Rau, Germany's Social Democratic president, recently reiterated what has been the dominant view, at least on the left. Germans, he said, could be "glad" or "thankful" for their citizenship, but they could not feel "proud." Conservative politicians seized on the statement. Thomas Goppel of the Christian Social Union, the Bavarian sister party of the Christian Democrats, accused the president of polarizing the nation and added, "One must ask whether a president who does not have this pride can represent a country of eighty million citizens." Lorenz Meyer, the general secretary of the Christian Democrats, has pointedly used the phrase, "I am proud to be a German."

Some on the left have struck back. The Green Party's Jürgen Triffin, environment minister in the Social Democratic-Green coalition government, said of the balding Mr. Meyer, "He not only looks like a skinhead, he thinks like one." Triffin later apologized, but a number of conservatives are demanding his resignation.

The left/right division on the matter does not always hold. The Social Democratic chancellor, Gerhard Schröder, distanced himself from President Rau's comment and declared himself "a German patriot who is proud of his country." Schröder is a politician noted for his shrewd sense of public opinion and for his willingness to adjust his views to coincide with that opinion. His comments suggest, therefore, that he knows it would be a mistake for the German left to become identified as unpatriotic. Fears that expressions of patriotism would reawaken atavistic nationalist furies have decreased in recent years. Indeed, many Germans argue that suppression of healthy patriotism will only encourage reactionary nationalism. Guido Westerwelle, general secretary of the centrist Free Democrats, puts it this way: "We must not allow neo-Nazis and skinheads to define what national pride is. We democrats, from conservatives to social democrats, must show pride in our country."

In an interesting complication, the reunification of the two Germanys has intensified calls for unapologetic expressions of patriotic pride. The Marxist

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rulers of the former East Germany taught their seventeen million subjects that they had no reason to feel guilt for Nazi crimes. Marxists had fought Nazis, after all, and were never part of the capitalist/fascist axis responsible for the Nazi phenomenon. East Germany, founded on Marxist principles and allied with a Soviet Union that had been the nation most responsible for Hitler's defeat, held no taint of association with the crimes of the Third Reich. The analysis here was facile and dubious, but it apparently was persuasive. Most former East Germans do not in fact hold themselves responsible for what happened between 1933 and 1945, and feel few of the reservations their western counterparts do toward full-throated declarations of national pride.

This is, in the end, a matter for Germans themselves to sort out, but given the history of modern Germany outsiders are inevitably inclined toward nervous kibbitzing. (I remember my father once putting the matter in a way that oddly combined pride in and suspicion of his ethnic heritage: Allied control over a defeated Germany after 1945 would have to be very firm and near perpetual, he insisted, because the Germans were so immensely gifted and forceful they would otherwise soon become again the controllers of—at least—Europe.) German patriotism will always be a special case, one that requires careful watching—in the first instance from Germans themselves. After Auschwitz, Jews insist Never Again. The equivalent imperative among Germans must be, Never Forget.

That said, the advocates of patriotic pride seem to me correct. Recall the Vietnam years in America. The radical left trashed patriotism, insisting smugly that a nation characterized, past and present, by racism, sexism, and imperialism was undeserving of the love of those of refined sensibility. Who could love (how fitting the term) Amerika? (The more insufferable version of the argument was that only those who trashed America truly loved her.) Distinctions, of course, must be made: the moral equivalence with Nazism implied by "Amerika" was odious and historically ignorant. Germans suspicious of affirming their homeland have far better reasons than did those Americans.

Still, it is in the long-term interest both of Germany and her neighbors that she continue on her path to being a "normal" society, and normal citizens of normal countries feel affection for, and pride in, their nation. For many of us, the phrase "I am proud to be a German" will never be other than unsettling. But all things considered, it will be good if today's Germans come to feel free to say it. But, at the same time, never forgetting. FT

Exercise

In certain lights, our garden looks almost—
not habitable, exactly, but like a garden,

all sudden jonquils, an unexpected host
of primrose like grounded moths. Think Eden

in the aftermath: boxwoods outgrowing
their bequeathed rounded, cornered, or conical

shapes. Dropped limbs. The grass needing mowing.
Windfalls liquefied, a smell

of last November. Hindsight. Fruit flies
ascending like visible, audible breath.

Imagine, against the wall, a rusted cooker
showered with damp white blooms. An onlooker

at an open window, saying, *ah, here's death*
undone, again. And glad of the exercise.

Sally Thomas

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Opinion

G. E. M. Anscombe: Living the Truth

John M. Dolan

G. E. M. Anscombe, widely recognized as one of the greatest philosophers of the twentieth century, died on January 5 in Cambridge, England, at the age of eighty-one. Few thinkers can claim solid footing in two traditions; she was deeply grounded in three: classical philosophy (particularly Aristotle), Catholicism (especially Aquinas and Anselm), and the flowering of modern philosophy stimulated by Gottlieb Frege. From the time she denounced Britain's participation in World War II as a girl (because it was plain to her, just months out of her teens, that Britain would be carrying out deliberate attacks on civilians), through her widely publicized opposition as a young don to Oxford's awarding an honorary degree to Harry Truman (on the ground that "having a couple of massacres to his credit" disqualifies a man for public honors), to her recent arrests in her seventies for participation in pro-life actions parallel to those carried out by "Operation Rescue" in the United States (because she found the life of a conceived child as worthy of protection and respect as any other), her life recalls John Paul II's injunction: "Always seek the truth; venerate the truth discovered; obey the truth. There is no joy beyond this search, this veneration and obedience." She knew the joy of that search, and she knew what it is to "obey the truth." It is fitting that her last major discourse, the inaugural lecture for an endowed chair she held at the International Institute for Philosophy in Liechtenstein, was titled "Die Wahrheit Thun" ("Doing the Truth").

The daughter of Gertrude Elizabeth Anscombe and Alan Wells Anscombe (science master at Dulwich College), Gertrude Elizabeth Margaret Anscombe, known to the academic world as "Miss Anscombe" and to her friends as "Elizabeth," was born on March 18, 1919 in Limerick, Ireland, where her father, then a British army officer, was posted. In 1937, she graduated from Sydenham High School and entered Oxford where she read "Mods & Greats" (classics, ancient history, and philosophy) at St. Hugh's College. In her first year at Oxford, she converted to Catholicism. In 1938, after mass at Blackfriars on the Feast of Corpus Christi, she met Peter Geach, a young man three years her senior who was also a recent convert to Catholicism. Like her, Geach was destined to achieve eminence in philosophy, but philosophy played no role in bringing about the romance that blossomed. Smitten by Miss Anscombe's beauty and voice, Geach immediately inquired of mutual friends whether she was "reliably Catholic." Upon learning that she was, he pursued her and, swiftly, their hearts were entangled. Since three years of the Greats curriculum were still before her, they postponed marriage. As Miss Anscombe pursued her undergraduate studies, Geach was her philosophical mentor (remaining her deeply valued philosophical interlocutor and collaborator the rest of her life). They married in 1941, after she had graduated (with a First) and been awarded a research fellowship at St. Hugh's College, Oxford. The following year, 1942, she was awarded a research fellowship at Newnham College, Cambridge. When this fellowship expired, she was elected to a research fellowship (later to an official fellowship) at Somerville College, Oxford, remaining there until 1970.

Though she was a beginning graduate student when she and Ludwig Wittgenstein met in Cambridge in the 1940s, he soon recognized her remarkable philosophical powers and they became good friends. He named her an executor (along with Rush Rhees and G. H. von Wright) of his literary estate and entrusted to her the task of translating his works, including his masterpiece, *Philosophical Investigations*. Before his death in 1951, he arranged for her to spend an extended time in Vienna to strengthen her German and absorb nuances of his own Viennese dialect. In 1970, Anscombe was appointed to the chair Wittgenstein had occupied at Cambridge University, a position she held until her retirement from teaching in 1986.

Her international reputation as a formidable debater had early roots. At Oxford in 1948, she took on (and trounced) C. S. Lewis in a debate still discussed a half-century later. It focused on the third chapter of his book *Miracles*. Everyone present (including Lewis) recognized that the young philosophy don's penetrating critique had undone his arguments. Some writers think that it had also undone him. A. N. Wilson, ignoring Lewis' actual literary production after 1948, asserts that "The confrontation with Elizabeth Anscombe . . . drove him into the form of literature for which he is today most popular: children's stories." More scrupulous writers also portray the debate as a "humiliating experience" (George Sayer), a turning point in his life that Lewis recalled "with real horror" (Derek Brewer). Sayer asserts that the experience led Lewis to abandon theology and characterizes his subsequent religious writings as "devotional" and "without

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contentious arguments." Anscombe rejected claims that Lewis altered his aims as a result of the debate. Lewis undeniably did do something: he rewrote the contested chapter, taking into account her criticisms. Anscombe deemed this an act of admirable intellectual honesty. She and Lewis were dinner companions a few weeks after the debate and enjoyed a pleasant evening—scarcely the sequel one would expect if the encounter had left Lewis quivering in self-doubt. (Anscombe's critique of Lewis, her first purely philosophical publication, appeared in the *Socratic Digest* [Oxford] in 1948 and is reprinted, with comments by her about the debate, in volume two of her collected papers, *Metaphysics and the Philosophy of Mind.*)

Anscombe, an analytic philosopher, wrote:

> Analytical philosophy is more characterized by styles of argument and investigation than by doctrinal content. It is thus possible for people of widely different beliefs to be practitioners of this sort of philosophy. It ought not to surprise anyone that a seriously believing Catholic Christian should also be an analytical philosopher.

Her own standards of rigor in argument and trenchancy of expression were uncommonly high even in a field that prizes those virtues. She also had a rare gift of drawing others into the projects on which she was working. Colleagues and students found themselves caught up in the excitement (and difficulties) of the problem or line of investigation currently absorbing her energies. A contributor to a Festschrift in her honor wrote: "Philosophy as she does it is fresh; her arguments take unexpected turns and make unexpected connections, and show always how much there is that had not been seen before." She had a knack of beginning with seemingly obvious remarks and proceeding by apparently simple steps to the nerve of deep problems and truths.

Anscombe's writing is pure and concentrated, often making severe demands on her reader. Hers is not prose for the inattentive or hasty. A baffled reader might try reading her difficult passages aloud slowly in order to grasp them. According to a possibly apocryphal tale, she once said to A. J. Ayer: "If you didn't talk so quickly, people wouldn't think you were so clever"; to which Ayer replied: "If you didn't talk so slowly, people wouldn't think you were so profound."

The task of translating a great work of philosophy, apart from requiring exquisite command of two languages, demands philosophical powers of a high order. Uncritical scholars who view such translation as mostly routine transposition not requiring creative philosophical ability are badly mistaken. When the text in question is by an author as deep and as passionately concerned with precise expression as Wittgenstein, the demands on the translator's powers of expression and philosophical discernment are especially severe. The publication in 1953 of Anscombe's translation of *Philosophical Investigations* was a landmark of twentieth-century thought. It is worth observing that there has never appeared a corrected or revised version of her translation, a work "quoted all over the world," as a recent article in the *Guardian* remarks, "as if it were verbatim Wittgenstein rather than a translation, being written in an English style which is itself compelling." Had her translations of Wittgenstein constituted her entire corpus, she would have made a signal contribution to philosophy.

But those valuable translations were only part of her life's work. Apart from contributing to several volumes (e.g., *New Essays on Plato and Aristotle*, 1965), she published various monographs, many influential articles, and seven books. Among her articles is "Modern Moral Philosophy" (1958), which introduced the term "consequentialism" and transformed twentieth-century moral philosophy by delivering a damaging blow to the utilitarianism that had until then reigned largely unquestioned.

Her book *Intention* (1957), the founding document of the field of action theory and an undisputed classic of twentieth-century philosophy, is the stunning realization of a goal she mentioned in a 1939 pamphlet: "Before considering whether or not there are any persons who may not be attacked in war, we must try to elucidate . . . the doctrine of intention in human action." Donald Davidson, who with W. V. O. Quine's death last Christmas (eleven days before Anscombe's) is now dean of American philosophers, asserts that "Anscombe's *Intention* is the most important treatment of action since Aristotle." When Harvard University Press reissued it last fall, the new printing sold out within weeks.

She also published articles brilliantly articulating and defending Catholic teachings, including "On Transubstantiation" (1967), which explores the mysteries of the Eucharist, "Faith" (1981), and "Contraception and Chastity" (1974), which argues against contraception (as she later put it: "You might as well accept any sexual goings-on, if you accept contraceptive intercourse").

After the publication of her collected papers in 1981, Anscombe published a number of other papers of note, including a delightful syllabus of errors ("Twenty Opinions Common Among Modern Anglo-American Philosophers") in the proceedings of a Vatican conference (1986); bold reassessments of Anselm's nine-hundred-year-old "Ontological Argument" exploring interpretations under which it doesn't treat existence as a property and, thus, escapes Kant's criticism (*Thoreau Quarterly*, 1985, and *Philosophical Quarterly*, 1993); and a

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searching (unsigned) study of euthanasia and murder in the third chapter of the first part of *Euthanasia, Clinical Practice, and the Law* (1994). Writing about her work on Anselm, Anscombe remarked "[I have] thought harder about Anselm's argument than I did before. But I still think that I haven't thought hard enough. I don't know whether Anselm's argument is valid or invalid—only that it is a great deal more interesting than its common interpretation makes it."

Anscombe was a Fellow of the British Academy, an Honorary Member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the holder of Honorary Doctorates from Notre Dame University (1987) and the Université Catholique de Louvain (1989). Her awards include the Ehrenkreuz Pro Litteris et Artibus (1978), the Forschungspreis, Alexander von Humboldt Stiftung (1983), the Aquinas Medal of the American Catholic Philosophers Association (1984), and a Papal medal Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice (1999).

Her philosophical progeny include former students who are distinguished philosophers (including Nicholas Denyer, Sir Michael Dummett, Hidé Ishiguro, Sir Anthony Kenny, Anselm Müller, Thomas Nagel, and Roger Scruton) and a number of distinguished philosophers who, though never formally her students, have publicly acknowledged deep indebtedness to her, including Donald Davidson, Philippa Foot, and Iris Murdoch.

She worked in the field of medical ethics at four levels: composing penetrating analyses of ethical issues posed by euthanasia and other problems; cofounding (with the late Dr. Hymie Gordon of the Mayo Clinic and the present writer) the Program in Human Rights and Medicine at the University of Minnesota; speaking before many groups, including the National Right to Life Convention; and engaging in direct action, including the rescue acts of civil disobedience mentioned above, twice undergoing arrest and risking arrest a third time. Her youngest children—More and Tamsin—were arrested and fined many times in rescue work, each finally serving time in prison.

In "The Source of the Authority of the State," Anscombe explores the state's claim to exclusive authority over the exercise of deadly force and decides that the ground of this claim is the state's assumption of a particular task, namely, the protection of the innocent from unjust attack. She concludes that deliberate killing of the innocent (the canonical case of murder) is thus something civil authority can never engage in or authorize. She writes: "There is one consideration here which has something like the position of absolute zero or the velocity of light in current physics. It cannot possibly be an exercise of civic authority deliberately to kill or mutilate innocent subjects."

The sharp contrast between the response of the press to Anscombe's earlier activism and to her pro-life work strikingly illustrates the persistent bias concerning abortion pervading the news media. Anscombe's antiwar efforts as an unknown student attracted notice in the local British press (distressing the Archbishop of Birmingham); her campaign against Truman's honorary degree attracted worldwide media attention. But her dramatic civil disobedience at abortion mills, carried out long after she had acquired an international scholarly reputation and at an age when such actions put her frail health at risk, went wholly without notice. A newspaper photograph her family cherishes shows her being taken off by two policemen, but she is not identified in the caption or in the text of the accompanying article. It is safe to surmise that, if she had been arrested battling for what is called the "pro-choice" side, the press would have accorded the event widespread and respectful attention.

She was troubled by a heart ailment in her last two decades and was nearly killed in an automobile accident in 1996. Though she never recovered completely from the accident, she spent her final years living happily with her family in Cambridge, enjoying the attention and care they provided under the leadership of her devoted son More. During those years, she enjoyed conversation with visitors, made occasional trips, gave some talks, and (possibly emulating her husband Peter, whose latest book, *Truth and Hope*, has recently appeared from Notre Dame Press days after his eighty-fifth birthday) continued her philosophical work, composing, among other things, the inaugural address for the chair in Liechtenstein in 1996. The final publication in her lifetime, a paper titled "Practical Truth," appeared in *Logos* in 1999. She is survived by Peter Geach, seven children (all practicing Catholics), ten grandchildren, and her brother Thomas.

Last year, Elizabeth spoke to me about her lifelong friend Ruth Daniel, a childhood classmate who went up to Oxford with her in 1937. Although we had talked about Ruth on several occasions over the decades of our friendship, I was struck by the extent to which Elizabeth's present comments about Ruth applied to herself, and I made some notes. Two of the remarks: "I cannot state with enough truth and simplicity my confidence in the greatness of her intelligence and the holiness of her spirit," and "Her standards and her way of saying things were always excellent."

She was attended in her final hour by her husband and four of their children (Jenny, John, More, and Tamsin). Her last intentional act was kissing Peter Geach. She died as the family members at her bedside were concluding their recitation of the sorrowful mysteries of the rosary. The world has lost a remarkable

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philosopher as noteworthy for the moral grandeur of her life and thought as for the originality and power of her intellect—a philosopher who lived the truth.

JOHN M. DOLAN *is Morse-Alumni Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at the University of Minnesota.*

Not Outrageous Enough

Michael J. Baxter

Not outrageous enough. This is my ultimate assessment of the proposal George Marsden puts forward in his book *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship* (1997). But before explaining my assessment, I want to underscore the extraordinary importance of this book and, more broadly, of the kind of faith-informed scholarship that Marsden has been producing for years now. Through faith and hard work, Marsden and others have forced the modern academy to acknowledge and, at least to some degree, respect the efforts of Christian scholars and Christian scholarship. Without taking anything away from those accomplishments, I want to suggest that we revise the vision of Christian scholarship that informs Marsden's book in the direction of making it more comprehensive, integrated, unifying, totalizing.

Marsden's central proposal is that "mainstream American higher education should be more open to explicit discussion of the relation of religious faith to learning." In making this proposal, he emphasizes that he is simply asking that all scholars "participate on equal terms in academic dialogue." These terms are commonly accepted in the academy, as Marsden sees it, and can therefore be evenly applied to scholarly work done from any number of perspectives—feminist, Marxist, African-American, and Christian.

In large part, the book appeals to a sense of equity. If other scholars are permitted to bring their substantive beliefs to bear on their work, Christians should be as well, so long as they, like everyone else, adhere to the criteria of competent scholarship. More specifically, Christians should be permitted, according to Marsden, to bring to bear their beliefs about creation, the Incarnation, the Holy Spirit, and human nature on their work, in much the same way that a feminist does as regards her beliefs on the nature of marriage in patriarchal society or a Marxist does as regards his beliefs about the effects of industrialization. But this does not currently happen because the modern academy has a bias in favor of "naturalistic reductionism" and against Christian belief in the supernatural. This is why rules of procedure are important to Marsden: they are the means by which we can achieve the proper balance of religious and nonreligious voices amid the pluralism of the modern academy.

I must confess that, for at least three reasons, I am not as optimistic as Marsden about the possibilities for reform of the modern academy in support of Christian scholarship. First, I do not find there to be a very high level of agreement about basic beliefs or even simple procedural rules in the academy at large. This became startlingly clear to me in reading Marsden's argument that the preponderance of academics operate out of nonempirically based beliefs, such as the belief that all people should be treated equally regardless of race or gender or that special care and concern should be shown to the poor and the handicapped. In explaining this point, Marsden also states that "most [academics] believe that it would be wrong to kill infants."

Really? I don't think so. I think it depends on whether or not the infant has been born. In the case of the unborn, I venture to say that many academics, perhaps even most, would say it is up to the mother whether or not it is wrong to kill her infant. My perception here, of course, is shaped by my religiously based beliefs about infancy and what constitutes infanticide, but the point I want to make also has to do with the way conflict gets concealed in liberal settings. Beneath an apparent consensus, there often lurks a much more substantive set of disagreements, as there is regarding the morality of parents killing their offspring and the adequacy of narrating human events with naturalistic explanations—and also regarding, I might add, the nature of genuine consensus and thus the conditions under which it is proper to use such descriptions as "agreement" and "disagreement."

This leads to the second reason why I am less optimistic than Marsden about the prospect of Christian scholarship in the modern academy. Marsden's preferred model of the university is taken from the model of liberal discourse proffered by William James. In this model, there are innumerable chambers, each housing a particular scholar practicing a particular mode of inquiry: an atheist in one, a traditional believer in another, a naturalistic chemist in yet another, a metaphysical idealist next door to him, and next door to her a pragmatist doing what James himself did, i.e., showing the impossibility of metaphysics. "But," James writes, in the passage quoted by Marsden, "they all own the corridor, and all must pass through it if they want a practicable way of getting into or out of their respective rooms."

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Marsden confesses that he finds this image "quite congenial." I must confess that I find the image quite dreary. It gives the impression that scholarship is primarily an activity performed by isolated individuals who interact only when they are on the way to the restroom, the copy machine, the classroom, or the next conference. It gives no account of how the work of these various scholars might interrelate intellectually. It provides no room for determining if one or another of these scholars' views is the most truthful one. All we are given is a corridor through which these scholars pass and that these scholars supposedly "own," but they do so by virtue of necessity, not out of substantive intellectual beliefs held in common.

Marsden, in his gloss on this analogy, is clear about the necessity of this arrangement: "In a pluralistic society," he writes, "we have little choice but to accept pragmatic standards in public life." Thus he is not "challenging pragmatic liberalism as the modus operandi for the contemporary academy"; rather, he is "affirming it for that limited role" and then "arguing that there is no adequate pragmatic basis for marginalizing all supernaturalist religious viewpoints a priori." In a certain sense, he is arguing for what most any scholar argues for in our bureaucratized academic culture. He is arguing for more office space.

The third reason I am less optimistic about the prospect of Christian scholarship today has to do with the way that this pragmatic liberal model of academia attenuates Marsden's positive account of Christian belief. Here it should be noted that Marsden's theological vision of human nature is shaped, at least in part, by William James, as transmitted through the work of Reinhold Niebuhr. Marsden depicts human nature in terms of sin, which Niebuhr defined as humanity's ineradicable inclination to absolutize the relative, i.e., to make the self, the community, or the nation more important than the Creator. In this view, the Christian's task is to place absolute loyalty in God and to qualify our allegiances to all other human enterprises, to all governments or institutions of any sort.

The strength of this conception, Marsden notes, is that Christian scholars can avoid the twin errors of accepting current academic standards as ultimate or rejecting them as hopelessly corrupt. But there is a weakness to this conception of human nature as well. It does not account for the possibility of alternative construals of academic standards and alternative institutional settings within which those standards could be embodied. This weakness I would ascribe to an overly pessimistic account of the effects of sin and of the power of God to sanctify and make holy those claimed by Christ in and through the Church.

The theological issues are too complex to delve into here, so let me simply voice my concern that Marsden's, and Niebuhr's, notion of humility may actually be a "false humility" in two related senses: first, in the sense that it conforms all too readily to the pragmatic liberal model that currently dominates modern academic life; and second, in the sense that it conceals the possibility of constructing a genuine alternative to that model, a possibility that, in my opinion, Christian scholars should be taking up as a primary and urgent task.

But then what would such an alternative look like? The answer, in broadest terms, is that it would sponsor a comprehensive Christian intellectual vision, wherein all branches of knowledge—the humanities, the social sciences, and the natural sciences—would be brought into a complex but unitary account of the truth of God's creation as understood by the best scholarship up to this point. Its primary mission would be to foster Christian scholarship, and its institutional structures—its curriculum, departmental arrangements and divisions, and so on—would be ordered to this end. Most of its faculty, though not all, would understand their work as dedicated to advancing traditional Christian conceptions of the good, the true, and the beautiful, as these pertain in various ways to their respective fields of inquiry. This alternative, I would concede, may well seem utopian, but in making this concession I also want to make a point that was made ten years ago by Alasdair MacIntyre in the conclusion to *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*. MacIntyre notes that "the charge of utopianism is sometimes best understood more as a symptom of the condition of those who level it than an indictment of the projects against which it is directed," because often those who level the charge lack the imagination—or hope—to believe that the future could be very different from the present.

Let me sharpen my argument by focusing specifically on the field of history. I think it can be shown that this field as it is currently understood was founded in this country in the mid to late nineteenth century in an attempt to recount the past in a more scientific manner than was commonly done at the time by "amateurs" who were working out of specifically confessional perspectives. In the process, however, certain forms of causality (in Aristotelian terms, efficient causality) were privileged, and other forms of causality (formal and final) were marginalized. As a result, those working in the field of history must now labor under a truncated conception of how human events may be understood and explained, a conception, I would argue, that favors a pessimistic and unhopeful view of human nature. This has exerted an immense influence on the way religious history in the United States is told, as can be discerned in the work of field-shaping historians such as

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Perry Miller, Henry May, and Marsden himself. I have often wondered what these histories would look like if they were informed instead by, say, a traditional Aristotelian-Thomist understanding of human nature, the one articulated, for example, in *Veritatis Splendor.*

I pose this question not to answer it, but to suggest that this is the kind of question that should be taken up in reflecting on the way Christian scholars read and write history. In fact, this question has been taken up by some Christian scholars in one way or another for some years now. I am not certain what the outcome of this discussion will be. The issues are complex and difficult to grasp in their fullness.

In his book, Marsden appeals to J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* as an analogy for the way we Christian scholars should approach our work. He suggests that we think

> of our understanding of things as equivalent to that of the Hobbits in Tolkien's world. The most important thing to take into account is that we are involved in a great spiritual struggle between forces of darkness and light. Beyond knowing that, we can understand these forces only imperfectly. Nonetheless as limited creatures we accept that our role is to do what we can to promote the cause of the light and to use all our talents where they may be helpful.

This describes our situation rather well, I think, though it is important to note that Frodo and his companions rely, in making their journey, on the wisdom of the ancients: ancient kings and wizards, ancient stories and poems, ancient images and symbols, ancient teachings on the use and abuse of power in the cause of doing good.

Christian scholars have similar resources, all of which place at our disposal an ancient Wisdom, ancient and yet ever new. Only by shaping our own institutions will these resources be reliably available to us. Only with our own institutions will we be able to have a reliable and stable setting within which to enact our dramatic quest not only for knowledge but also for Wisdom. This means that Christian scholarship will fully flourish if, and only if, there exist universities that are born *ex corde Ecclesiae,* from the heart of the Church.

Michael J. Baxter, C.S.C., *is Associate Professor of Theology at the University of Notre Dame.*

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L'Chaim and Its Limits: Why Not Immortality?

Leon R. Kass

You don't have to be Jewish to drink *L'Chaim*, to lift a glass "To Life." Everyone in his right mind believes that life is good and that death is bad. But Jews have always had an unusually keen appreciation of life, and not only because it has been stolen from them so often and so cruelly. The celebration of life—of *this* life, not the next one—has from the beginning been central to Jewish ethical and religious sensibilities. In the Torah, "Be fruitful and multiply" is God's first blessing and first command. Judaism from its inception rejected child-sacrifice and regarded long life as a fitting divine reward for righteous living. At the same time, Judaism embraces medicine and the human activity of healing the sick; from the Torah the rabbis deduced not only permission for doctors to heal, but also the positive obligation to do so. Indeed, so strong is this reverence for life that the duty of *pikuah nefesh* requires that Jews violate the holy Shabbat in order to save a life. Not by accident do we Jews raise our glasses "*L'Chaim*."

Neither is it accidental that Jews have been enthusiastic boosters of modern medicine and modern biomedical science. Vastly out of proportion to their numbers, they build hospitals and laboratories, support medical research, and see their sons and daughters in the vanguard wherever new scientific discoveries are to be made and new remedies to be found. Yet this beloved biomedical project, for all its blessings, now raises for Jews and for all humanity a plethora of serious and often unprecedented moral challenges. Laboratory-assisted reproduction, artificial organs, genetic manipulation, psychoactive drugs, computer implants in the brain, and techniques to conquer aging—these and other present and projected techniques for altering our bodies and minds pose challenges to the very meaning of our humanity. Our growing power to control human life may require us to consider possible limits to the principle of *L'Chaim*.

One well-known set of challenges results from undesired consequences of medical success in sustaining life, as more and more people are kept alive by artificial means in greatly debilitated and degraded conditions. When, if ever, is it permissible for doctors to withhold antibiotics, discontinue a respirator, remove a feeding tube, or even assist in suicide or perform euthanasia?

A second set of challenges concerns the morality of means used to seek the cure of disease or the creation of life. Is it ethical to create living human embryos for the sole purpose of experimenting on them? To conceive a child in order that it may become a compatible bone marrow donor for an afflicted "sibling"? Is it ethical to practice human cloning to provide a child for an infertile couple?

Third, we may soon face challenges concerning the goal itself: Should we, partisans of life, welcome efforts to increase not just the average but also the maximum human life span, by conquering aging, decay, and ultimately mortality itself?

In the debates taking place in the United States, Jewish commentators on these and related medical ethical topics nearly always come down strongly in favor of medical progress and on the side of life—more life, longer life, new life. They treat the cure of disease, the prevention of death, and the prolongation of life as near-absolute values, trumping most if not all other moral objections. Unlike, say, Roman Catholic moralists who hold to certain natural law teachings that set

Leon R. Kass, M.D., *is the Addie Clark Harding Professor in the Committee on Social Thought and the College at the University of Chicago and author of* The Hungry Soul: Eating and the Perfection of Our Nature. *This article is adapted from a lecture given in Jerusalem in May 2000 under the auspices of the Shalem Center.*

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limits on what are permissible practices, the Jewish commentators, even if they acknowledge difficulties, ultimately wind up saying that life and health are good, and that therefore whatever serves more of each and both is better.

Let me give two examples out of my own experience. Four years ago, when I gave testimony on the ethics of human cloning before the National Bioethics Advisory Commission, I was surprised to discover that the two experts who had been invited to testify on the Jewish point of view were not especially troubled by the prospect. The Orthodox rabbi, invoking the goodness of life and the injunction to be fruitful and multiply, held that cloning of the husband or the wife to provide a child for an infertile couple was utterly unobjectionable according to Jewish law. The Conservative rabbi, while acknowledging certain worries, concluded: "If cloning human beings is intended to advance medical research or cure infertility, it has a proper place in God's scheme of things, as understood in the Jewish tradition." Let someone else worry about Brave-New-Worldly turning procreation into manufacture or the meaning of replacing heterosexual procreation by asexual propagation. Prospective cures for diseases and children for infertile couples suffice to legitimate human cloning—and, by extension, will legitimate farming human embryos for spare body parts or even creating babies in bottles when that becomes feasible.

The second example. At a meeting in March 2000 on "Extended Life, Eternal Life," scientists and theologians were invited to discuss the desirability of increasing the maximum human life span and, more radically, of treating death itself as a disease to be conquered. The major Jewish speaker, a professor at a leading rabbinical seminary, embraced the project—you should excuse me—whole hog. Gently needling his Christian colleagues by asserting that, for Jews, God is Life, rather than Love, he used this principle to justify any and all life-preserving and life-extending technologies, including those that might yield massive increases in the maximum human life expectancy. When I pressed him in discussion to see if he had any objections to the biomedical pursuit of immortality, he responded that Judaism would only welcome such a project.

I am prepared to accept the view that traditional Jewish sources may be silent on these matters, given that the halakhah could know nothing about test-tube babies, cloning, or the campaign to conquer aging. But, in my opinion, such unqualified endorsement of medical progress and the unlimited pursuit of longevity cannot be the counsel of wisdom, and, therefore, should not be the counsel of Jewish wisdom. *L'Chaim*, but with limits.

Let us address the question of *L'Chaim* and its limits in its starkest and most radical form: If life is good and more is better, should we not regard death as a disease and try to cure it? Although this formulation of the question may seem too futuristic or far-fetched, there are several reasons for taking it up and treating it seriously.

First, reputable scientists are today answering the question in the affirmative and are already making large efforts toward bringing about a cure. Three kinds of research, still in their infancy, are attracting new attention and energies. First is the use of hormones, especially human growth hormone (hGH), to restore and enhance youthful bodily vigor. In the United States, over ten thousand people—including many physicians—are already injecting themselves daily with hGH for anti-aging purposes, with apparently remarkable improvements in bodily fitness and performance, though there is as yet no evidence that the hormones yield any increase in life expectancy. When the patent on hGH expires in 2002 and the cost comes down from its current $1,000 per month, many more people are almost certainly going to be injecting themselves from the hormonal fountain of youth.

Second is research on stem cells, those omnicompetent primordial cells that, on different signals, turn into all the different differentiated tissues of the body—liver, heart, kidney, brain, etc. Stem cell technologies—combined with techniques of cloning—hold out the promise of an indefinite supply of replacement tissues and organs for any and all worn-out body parts. This is a booming area in commercial biotechnology, and one of the leading biotech entrepreneurs has been touting his company's research as promising indefinite prolongation of life.

Third, there is research into the genetic switches that control the biological processes of aging. The maximum life span for each species—roughly one hundred years for human beings—is almost certainly under genetic control. In a startling recent discovery, fruit-fly geneticists have shown that mutations in a *single* gene produce a 50 percent increase in the natural lifetime of the flies. Once the genes involved in regulating the human life cycle and setting the midnight hour are identified, scientists predict that they will be able to increase the human maximum age well beyond its natural limit. Quite frankly, I find some of the claims and predictions to be overblown, but it would be foolhardy to bet against scientific and technical progress along these lines.

But even if cures for aging and death are a long way off, there is a second and more fundamental reason for inquiring into the radical question of the desirability of gaining a cure for death. For truth to tell, victory over mortality is the unstated but implicit goal of modern medical science, indeed of the entire modern

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scientific project, to which mankind was summoned almost four hundred years ago by Francis Bacon and René Descartes. They quite consciously trumpeted the conquest of nature for the relief of man's estate, and they founded a science whose explicit purpose was to reverse the curse laid on Adam and Eve, and especially to restore the tree of life, by means of the tree of (scientific) knowledge. With medicine's increasing successes, realized mainly in the last half century, every death is increasingly regarded as premature, a failure of today's medicine that future research will prevent. In parallel with medical progress, a new moral sensibility has developed that serves precisely medicine's crusade against mortality: anything is permitted if it saves life, cures disease, prevents death. Regardless, therefore, of the imminence of anti-aging remedies, it is most worthwhile to reexamine the assumption upon which we have been operating: that everything should be done to preserve health and prolong life as much as possible, and that all other values must bow before the biomedical gods of better health, greater vigor, and longer life.

Recent proposals that we should conquer aging and death have not been without their critics. The criticism takes two forms: predictions of bad social consequences and complaints about distributive justice. Regarding the former, there are concerns about the effect on the size and age distribution of the population. How will growing numbers and percentages of people living well past one hundred affect, for example, work opportunities, retirement plans, hiring and promotion, cultural attitudes and beliefs, the structure of family life, relations between the generations, or the locus of rule and authority in government, business, and the professions? Even the most cursory examination of these matters suggests that the cumulative results of aggregated decisions for longer and more vigorous life could be highly disruptive and undesirable, even to the point that many individuals would be *worse off* through most of their lives, and worse off enough to offset the benefits of better health afforded them near the end of life. Indeed, several people have predicted that retardation of aging will present a classic instance of the Tragedy of the Commons, in which genuine and sought-for gains to individuals are nullified or worse, owing to the social consequences of granting them to everyone.

But other critics worry that technology's gift of long or immortal life will not be granted to everyone, especially if, as is likely, the treatments turn out to be expensive. Would it not be the ultimate injustice if only some people could afford a deathless existence, if the world were divided not only into rich and poor but into mortal and immortal?

Against these critics, the proponents of immortality research answer confidently that we will gradually figure out a way to solve these problems. We can handle any adverse social consequences through careful planning; we can overcome the inequities through cheaper technologies. Though I think these optimists woefully naive, let me for the moment grant their view regarding these issues. For both the proponents and their critics have yet to address thoughtfully the heart of the matter, the question of the goodness of the goal. The core question is this: Is it really true that longer life for individuals is an unqualified good?

How *much* longer life is a blessing for an individual? Ignoring now the possible harms flowing back to individuals from adverse social consequences, how much more life is good for us as individuals, other things being equal? How much more life do we want, assuming it to be healthy and vigorous? Assuming that it were up to us to set the human life span, where would or should we set the limit and why?

The simple answer is that no limit should be set. Life is good, and death is bad. Therefore, the more life the better, provided, of course, that we remain fit and our friends do, too.

This answer has the virtues of clarity and honesty. But most public advocates of conquering aging deny any such greediness. They hope not for immortality, but for something reasonable—just a few more years.

How many years are reasonably few? Let us start with ten. Which of us would find unreasonable or unwelcome the addition of ten healthy and vigorous years to his or her life, years like those between ages thirty and forty? We could learn more, earn more, see more, do more. Maybe we should ask for five years on top of that? Or ten? Why not fifteen, or twenty, or more?

If we can't immediately land on the reasonable number of added years, perhaps we can locate the principle. What is the principle of reasonableness? Time needed for our plans and projects yet to be completed? Some multiple of the age of a generation, say, that we might live to see great-grandchildren fully grown? Some notion—traditional, natural, revealed—of the proper life span for a being such as man? We have no answer to this question. We do not even know how to choose among the principles for setting our new life span.

Under such circumstances, lacking a standard of reasonableness, we fall back on our wants and desires. Under liberal democracy, this means the desires of the majority for whom the attachment to life—or the fear of death—knows no limits. It turns out that the simple answer is the best: we want to live and live, and not to wither and not to die. For most of us, especially under modern secular conditions in which more and more people believe that this is the only life they have, the desire to prolong the life span (even modestly) must be seen as expressing a desire *never* to grow old and die.

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However naive their counsel, those who propose immortality deserve credit: they honestly and shamelessly expose this desire.

Some, of course, eschew any desire for longer life. They seek not adding years to life, but life to years. For them, the ideal life span would be our natural (once thought three-, now known to be) fourscore and ten, or if by reason of strength, fivescore, lived with full powers right up to death, which could come rather suddenly, painlessly, at the maximal age.

This has much to recommend it. Who would not want to avoid senility, crippling arthritis, the need for hearing aids and dentures, and the degrading dependencies of old age? But, in the absence of these degenerations, would we remain content to spurn longer life? Would we not become even more disinclined to exit? Would not death become even more of an affront? Would not the fear and loathing of death increase in the absence of its harbingers? We could no longer comfort the widow by pointing out that her husband was delivered from his suffering. Death would always be untimely, unprepared for, shocking.

Montaigne saw it clearly:

> I notice that in proportion as I sink into sickness, I naturally enter into a certain disdain for life. I find that I have much more trouble digesting this resolution when I am in health than when I have a fever. Inasmuch as I no longer cling so hard to the good things of life when I begin to lose the use and pleasure of them, I come to view death with much less frightened eyes. This makes me hope that the farther I get from life and the nearer to death, the more easily I shall accept the exchange. . . . If we fell into such a change [decrepitude] suddenly, I don't think we could endure it. But when we are led by Nature's hand down a gentle and virtually imperceptible slope, bit by bit, one step at a time, she rolls us into this wretched state and makes us familiar with it; so that we find no shock when youth dies within us, which in essence and in truth is a harder death than the complete death of a languishing life or the death of old age; inasmuch as the leap is not so cruel from a painful life as from a sweet and flourishing life to a grievous and painful one.

Thus it is highly likely that even a modest prolongation of life with vigor or even only a preservation of youthfulness with no increase in longevity would make death less acceptable and would exacerbate the desire to keep pushing it away—unless, for some reason, such life could also prove less satisfying.

Could longer, healthier life be less satisfying? How could it be, if life is good and death is bad? Perhaps the simple view is in error. Perhaps mortality is not simply an evil, perhaps it is even a blessing—not only for the welfare of the community, but even for us as individuals. How could this be?

I wish to make the case for the virtues of mortality. Against my own strong love of life, and against my even stronger wish that no more of my loved ones should die, I aspire to speak truth to my desires by showing that the finitude of human life is a blessing for every human individual, whether he knows it or not.

I know I won't persuade many people to my position. But I do hope I can convince readers of the gravity—I would say, the unique gravity—of this question. We are not talking about some minor new innovation with ethical wrinkles about which we may chatter or regulate as usual. Conquering death is not something that we can try for a while and then decide whether the results are better or worse—according to, God only knows, what standard. On the contrary, this is a question in which our very humanity is at stake, not only in the consequences but also in the very meaning of the choice. For to argue that human life would be better without death is, I submit, to argue that human life would be better being something other than human. To be immortal would not be just to continue life as we mortals now know it, only forever. The new immortals, in the decisive sense, would not be like us at all. If this is true, a human choice for bodily immortality would suffer from the deep confusion of choosing to have some great good only on the condition of turning into someone else. Moreover, such an immortal someone else, in my view, will be less well off than we mortals are now, thanks indeed to our mortality.

It goes without saying that there is no virtue in the death of a child or a young adult, or the untimely or premature death of anyone, before they had attained to the measure of man's days. I do not mean to imply that there is virtue in the particular *event* of death for anyone. Nor am I suggesting that separation through death is not painful for the survivors, those for whom the deceased was an integral part of their lives. Instead, my question concerns the fact of our finitude, the fact of our mortality—the fact *that we must die*, the fact that a full life for a human being has a biological, built-in limit, one that has evolved as part of our nature. Does this fact also have value? Is our finitude good for us—as individuals? (I intend this question entirely in the realm of natural reason and apart from any question about a life after death.)

To praise mortality must seem to be madness. If mortality is a blessing, it surely is not widely regarded as such. Life seeks to live, and rightly suspects all counsels

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of finitude. "Better to be a slave on earth than the king over all the dead," says Achilles in Hades to the visiting Odysseus, in apparent regret for his prior choice of the short but glorious life. Moreover, though some cultures—such as the Eskimo—can instruct and moderate somewhat the lust for life, liberal Western society gives it free rein, beginning with a political philosophy founded on a fear of violent death, and reaching to our current cults of youth and novelty, the cosmetic replastering of the wrinkles of age, and the widespread anxiety about disease and survival. Finally, the virtues of finitude—if there are any—may never be widely appreciated in any age or culture, if appreciation depends on a certain wisdom, if wisdom requires a certain detachment from the love of oneself and one's own, and if the possibility of such detachment is given only to the few. Still, if it is wisdom, the rest of us should hearken, for we may learn something of value for ourselves.

How, then, might our finitude be good for us? I offer four benefits, first among which is *interest and engagement.* If the human life span were increased even by only twenty years, would the pleasures of life increase proportionately? Would professional tennis players really enjoy playing 25 percent more games of tennis? Would the Don Juans of our world feel better for having seduced 1,250 women rather than 1,000? Having experienced the joys and tribulations of raising a family until the last had left for college, how many parents would like to extend the experience by another ten years? Likewise, those whose satisfaction comes from climbing the career ladder might well ask what there would be to do for fifteen years after one had been CEO of Microsoft, a member of Congress, or the President of Harvard for a quarter of a century? Even less clear are the additions to personal happiness from more of the same of the less pleasant and less fulfilling activities in which so many of us are engaged so much of the time. It seems to be as the poet says: "We move and ever spend our lives amid the same things, and not by any length of life is any new pleasure hammered out."

Second, *seriousness and aspiration.* Could life be serious or meaningful without the limit of mortality? Is not the limit on our time the ground of our taking life seriously and living it passionately? To know and to feel that one goes around only once, and that the deadline is not out of sight, is for many people the necessary spur to the pursuit of something worthwhile. "Teach us to number our days," says the Psalmist, "that we may get a heart of wisdom." To number our days is the condition for making them count. Homer's immortals—Zeus and Hera, Apollo and Athena—for all their eternal beauty and youthfulness, live shallow and rather frivolous lives, their passions only transiently engaged, in first this and then that. They live as spectators of the mortals, who by comparison have depth, aspiration, genuine feeling, and hence a real center in their lives. Mortality makes life matter.

There may be some activities, especially in some human beings, that do not require finitude as a spur. A powerful desire for understanding can do without external proddings, let alone one related to mortality; and as there is never too much time to learn and to understand, longer, more vigorous life might be simply a boon. The best sorts of friendship, too, seem capable of indefinite growth, especially where growth is somehow tied to learning—though one may wonder whether real friendship doesn't depend in part on the shared perceptions of a common fate. But, in any case, I suspect that these are among the rare exceptions. For most activities, and for most of us, I think it is crucial that we recognize and feel the force of not having world enough and time.

A third matter, *beauty and love.* Death, says Wallace Stevens, is the mother of beauty. What he means is not easy to say. Perhaps he means that only a mortal being, aware of his mortality and the transience and vulnerability of all natural things, is moved to make beautiful artifacts, objects that will last, objects whose order will be immune to decay as their maker is not, beautiful objects that will bespeak and beautify a world that needs beautification, beautiful objects for other mortal beings who can appreciate what they cannot themselves make because of a taste for the beautiful, a taste perhaps connected to awareness of the ugliness of decay.

Perhaps the poet means to speak of natural beauty as well, which beauty—unlike that of objects of art—depends on its *im*permanence. Could the beauty of flowers depend on the fact that they will soon wither? Does the beauty of spring warblers depend upon the fall drabness that precedes and follows? What about the fading, late afternoon winter light or the spreading sunset? Is the beautiful necessarily fleeting, a peak that cannot be sustained? Or does the poet mean not that the beautiful is beautiful because mortal, but that our appreciation of its beauty depends on our appreciation of mortality—in us and in the beautiful? Does not love swell before the beautiful precisely on recognizing that it (and we) will not always be? Is not our mortality the cause of our enhanced appreciation of the beautiful and the worthy and of our treasuring and loving them? How deeply could one deathless "human" being love another?

Fourth, there is the peculiarly human beauty of character, *virtue and moral excellence.* To be mortal means that it is possible to give one's life, not only in one moment, say, on the field of battle, but also in the many other ways in which we are able in action to rise above

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attachment to survival. Through moral courage, endurance, greatness of soul, generosity, devotion to justice—in acts great and small—we rise above our mere creatureliness, spending the precious coinage of the time of our lives for the sake of the noble and the good and the holy. We free ourselves from fear, from bodily pleasures, or from attachments to wealth—all largely connected with survival—and in doing virtuous deeds overcome the weight of our neediness; yet for this nobility, vulnerability and mortality are the necessary conditions. The immortals cannot be noble.

Of this, too, the poets teach. Odysseus, long suffering, has already heard the shade of Achilles' testimony in praise of life when he is offered immortal life by the nymph Calypso. She is a beautiful goddess, attractive, kind, yielding; she sings sweetly and weaves on a golden loom; her island is well-ordered and lovely, free of hardships and suffering. Says the poet, "Even a god who came into that place would have admired what he saw, the heart delighted within him." Yet Odysseus turns down the offer to be lord of her household and immortal:

> Goddess and queen, do not be angry with me. I myself know that all you say is true and that circumspect Penelope can never match the impression you make for beauty and stature. She is mortal after all, and you are immortal and ageless. But even so, what I want and all my days I pine for is to go back to my house and see that day of my homecoming. And if some god batters me far out on the wine-blue water, I will endure it, keeping a stubborn spirit inside me, for already I have suffered much and done much hard work on the waves and in the fighting.

To suffer, to endure, to trouble oneself for the sake of home, family, community, and genuine friendship, is truly to live, and is the clear choice of this exemplary mortal. This choice is both the mark of his excellence and the basis for the visible display of his excellence in deeds noble and just. Immortality is a kind of oblivion—like death itself.

But, someone might reasonably object, if mortality is such a blessing, why do so few cultures recognize it as such? Why do so many teach the promise of life after death, of something eternal, of something imperishable? This takes us to the heart of the matter.

What is the meaning of this concern with immortality? *Why* do we human beings seek immortality? Why do we want to live longer or forever? Is it really first and most because we do not want to die, because we do not want to leave this embodied life on earth or give up our earthly pastimes, because we want to see more and do more? I do not think so. This may be what we say, but it is not what we finally mean. Mortality as such is not our defect, nor bodily immortality our goal. Rather, mortality is at most a pointer, a derivative manifestation, or an accompaniment of some deeper deficiency. The promise of immortality and eternity answers rather to a deep truth about the human soul: the human soul yearns for, longs for, aspires to some condition, some state, some goal toward which our earthly activities are directed but which cannot be attained in earthly life. Our soul's reach exceeds our grasp; it seeks more than continuance; it reaches for something beyond us, something that for the most part eludes us. Our distress with mortality is the derivative manifestation of the conflict between the transcendent longings of the soul and the all-too-finite powers and fleshly concerns of the body.

What is it that we lack and long for, but cannot reach? One possibility is completion in another person. For example, Plato's Aristophanes says we seek wholeness through complete and permanent bodily and psychic union with a unique human being whom we love, our "missing other half." Plato's Socrates, in contrast, says it is rather wholeness through wisdom, through comprehensive knowledge of the beautiful truth about the whole, that which philosophy seeks but can never attain. Yet again, biblical religion says we seek wholeness through dwelling in God's presence, love, and redemption—a restoration of innocent wholeheartedness lost in the Garden of Eden. But, please note, these and many other such accounts of human aspiration, despite their differences, all agree on this crucial point: man longs not so much for deathlessness as for wholeness, wisdom, goodness, and godliness—longings that cannot be satisfied fully in our embodied earthly life, the only life, by natural reason, we know we have. Hence the attractiveness of any prospect or promise of a different and thereby fulfilling life hereafter. The decisive inference is clear: none of these longings can be answered by prolonging earthly life. Not even an unlimited amount of "more of the same" will satisfy our deepest aspirations.

If this is correct, there follows a decisive corollary regarding the battle against death. The human taste for immortality, for the imperishable and the eternal, is not a taste that the biomedical conquest of death could satisfy. We would still be incomplete; we would still lack wisdom; we would still lack God's presence and redemption. Mere continuance will not buy fulfillment. Worse, its pursuit threatens—already threatens—human happiness by distracting us from the goals toward which our souls naturally point. By diverting our aim, by misdirecting so much individual and social energy toward the goal of bodily immortality, we may seriously undermine our chances for living as well as we can and for satisfying to some extent, however incompletely, our deep-

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est longings for what is best. The implication for human life is hardly nihilistic: once we acknowledge and accept our finitude, we can concern ourselves with living *well*, and care first and most for the *well-being* of our souls, and not so much for their mere existence.

But perhaps this is all a mistake. Perhaps there is no such longing of the soul. Perhaps there is no soul. Certainly modern science doesn't speak about the soul; neither does medicine or even our *psych*iatrists, whose name means "healers of the soul." Perhaps we are just animals, complex ones to be sure, but animals nonetheless, content just to be here, frightened in the face of danger, avoiding pain, seeking pleasure.

Curiously, however, biology has its own view of our nature and its inclinations. Biology also teaches about transcendence, though it eschews talk about the soul. Biology has long shown us a feasible way to rise above our finitude and to participate in something permanent and eternal: I refer not to stem cells, but to procreation—the bearing and caring for offspring, for the sake of which many animals risk and even sacrifice their lives. Indeed, in all higher animals, reproduction *as such* implies both the acceptance of the death of self and participation in its transcendence. The salmon, willingly swimming upstream to spawn and die, makes vivid this universal truth.

But man is natured for more than spawning. Human biology teaches how our life points beyond itself—to our offspring, to our community, to our species. Like the other animals, man is built for reproduction. More than the other animals, man is also built for sociality. And, alone among the animals, man is also built for culture—not only though capacities to transmit and receive skills and techniques, but also through capacities for shared beliefs, opinions, rituals, traditions. We are built with leanings toward, and capacities for, perpetuation. Is it not possible that aging and mortality are part of this construction, and that the rate of aging and the human life span have been selected for their usefulness to the task of perpetuation? Could not extending the human life span place a great strain on our nature, jeopardizing our project and depriving us of success? Interestingly, perpetuation is a goal that *is* attainable, a transcendence of self that *is* (largely) realizable. Here is a form of participating in the enduring that is open to us, without qualification—provided, that is, that we remain open to it.

Biological considerations aside, simply to covet a prolonged life span for ourselves is both a sign and a cause of our failure to open ourselves to procreation and to any higher purpose. It is probably no accident that it is a generation whose intelligentsia proclaim the death of God and the meaninglessness of life that embarks on life's indefinite prolongation and that seeks to cure the emptiness of life by extending it forever. For the desire to prolong youthfulness is not only a childish desire to eat one's life and keep it; it is also an expression of a childish and narcissistic wish incompatible with devotion to posterity. It seeks an endless present, isolated from anything truly eternal, and severed from any true continuity with past and future. It is in principle hostile to children, because children, those who come after, are those who will take one's place; *they* are life's answer to mortality, and their presence in one's house is a constant reminder that one no longer belongs to the frontier generation. One cannot pursue agelessness for oneself and remain faithful to the spirit and meaning of perpetuation.

In perpetuation, we send forth not just the seed of our bodies, but also the bearer of our hopes, our truths, and those of our tradition. If our children are to flower, we need to sow them well and nurture them, cultivate them in rich and wholesome soil, clothe them in fine and decent opinions and mores, and direct them toward the highest light, to grow straight and tall—that they may take our place as we took that of those who planted us and made way for us, so that in time they, too, may make way and plant. But if they are truly to flower, we must go to seed; we must wither and give ground.

Against these considerations, the clever ones will propose that if we could do away with death, we would do away with the need for posterity. But that is a self-serving and shallow answer, one that thinks of life and aging solely in terms of the state of the body. It ignores the psychological effects simply of the passage of time—of experiencing and learning about the way things are. After a while, no matter how healthy we are, no matter how respected and well placed we are socially, most of us cease to look upon the world with fresh eyes. Little surprises us, nothing shocks us, righteous indignation at injustice dies out. We have seen it all already, seen it all. We have often been deceived, we have made many mistakes of our own. Many of us become small-souled, having been humbled not by bodily decline or the loss of loved ones but by life itself. So our ambition also begins to flag, or at least our noblest ambitions. As we grow older, Aristotle already noted, we "aspire to nothing great and exalted and crave the mere necessities and comforts of existence." At some point, most of us turn and say to our intimates, Is this all there is? We settle, we accept our situation—if we are lucky enough to be able to accept it. In many ways, perhaps in the most profound ways, most of us go to sleep long before our deaths—and we might even do so earlier in life if death no longer spurred us to make something of ourselves.

In contrast, it is in the young where aspiration, hope,

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freshness, boldness, and openness spring anew—even when they take the form of overturning our monuments. Immortality for oneself through children may be a delusion, but participating in the natural and eternal renewal of human possibility through children is not—not even in today's world.

For it still stands as it did when Homer made Glaukos say to Diomedes:

> As is the generation of leaves, so is that of humanity. The wind scatters the leaves to the ground, but the live timber burgeons with leaves again in the season of spring returning. So one generation of man will grow while another dies.

And yet it also still stands, as this very insight of Homer's itself reveals, that human beings are in another respect unlike the leaves; that the eternal renewal of human beings embraces also the eternally human possibility of learning and self-awareness; that we, too, here and now may participate with Homer, with Plato, with the Bible, yes with Descartes and Bacon, in catching at least some glimpse of the enduring truths about nature, God, and human affairs; and that we, too, may hand down and perpetuate this pursuit of wisdom and goodness to our children and our children's children. Children and their education, not growth hormone and perpetual organ replacement, are life's—and wisdom's—answer to mortality.

This ancient Homeric wisdom is, in fact, not so far from traditional Jewish wisdom. For although we believe that life is good and long life is better, we hold something higher than life itself to be best. We violate one Shabbat so that the person whose life is saved may observe many Shabbatoth. We are obliged to accept death rather than commit idolatry, murder, or sexual outrage. Though we love life and drink *L'Chaim*, we have been taught of old to love wisdom and justice and godliness more; among Jews, at least until recently, teachers were more revered than doctors. Regarding immortality, God Himself declares—in the Garden of Eden story—that human beings, once they have attained the burdensome knowledge of good and bad, should not have access to the tree of life. Instead, they are to cleave to the Torah as a tree of life, a life-perfecting path to righteousness and holiness. Unlike the death-defying Egyptians, those ancient precursors of the quest for bodily immortality, the Children of Israel do not mummify or embalm their dead; we bury our ancestors but keep them alive in memory, and, accepting our mortality, we look forward to the next generation. Indeed, the mitzvah to be fruitful and multiply, when rightly understood, celebrates not the life we have and selfishly would cling to, but the life that replaces us.

Confronted with the growing moral challenges posed by biomedical technology, let us resist the siren song of the conquest of aging and death. Let us cleave to our ancient wisdom and lift our voices and properly toast *L'Chaim*, to life beyond our own, to the life of our grandchildren and their grandchildren. May they, God willing, know health and long life, but especially so that they may also know the pursuit of truth and righteousness and holiness. And may they hand down and perpetuate this pursuit of what is humanly finest to succeeding generations for all time to come. FT

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The Liberal Uses of Religion

Timothy Burns

What's God Got To Do with the American Experiment? Edited by E. J. Dionne, Jr. and John J. DiIulio, Jr. *Brookings. 188 pp. $16.05 paper.*

The editors of this intriguing collection of essays have asked prominent social scientists, pastors, mayors, activists, and theologians to address themselves to the question of the proper relation between religion and politics. The collection grew out of meetings at the Brookings Institution that discussed work on religion and civic life and the alleviation of poverty through partnerships of government and faith-based organizations (FBOs).

To many Americans, of course—especially intellectuals—inquiry into a possible partnership between the federal government and religious organizations will seem either unnecessary or suspicious. Few things appear more fundamental to our liberal democracy than the strict separation of church and state. But as James Q. Wilson notes, despite or rather because of the First Amendment, there has never been an easy answer to the question of the proper relation between the two. Neither the framers of that Amendment nor the subsequent (and incoherent) attempts by the courts to interpret it allow us to say that it bans "nondiscriminatory government aid to all religions generally." Nor has our political practice—from daily congressional prayers to army chaplains to federal grants for students in religious colleges—simply been one of strict separation. Finally, as Melissa Rogers notes, both major party presidential candidates in the 2000 election strongly endorsed the Charitable Choice provision of the 1996 Welfare Reform Act, which prohibits government from discriminating against nonprofits on the basis of their religious nature and thus opens the way for partnerships between government and religiously oriented social service organizations.

As these essays make clear, moreover, it is not altogether surprising that our political order has never been able to resolve the issue of the proper relation between religion and political life, and hence that there is a need to examine it more closely. For the standard liberal position on that matter, presented here with unusual clarity by Alan Wolfe, is inherently problematic. Wolfe asserts that "faith is a private matter between an individual and his or her God." But because he is aware of the close relation that has always obtained between moral virtue and religion, Wolfe realizes that in order to exclude religion from public life, he must defend public life as constituting "a zone of amoral Machiavellianism" for us. "Such Christian virtues as humility and charity" in our political leaders "may make us proud," he claims, but our *survival* depends on "duplicity, dishonesty, even disrespect for human life." These vices are even "duties" for our public leaders. Goodness and ruthlessness are theoretically incompatible, but we allow them to coexist by means of our private/public distinction: you are free to be as good as your religion demands in the private sphere, and as ruthless as we need you to be in public.

The difficulty with Wolfe's argument, as Jean Bethke Elshtain rightly points out, is that public Machiavellianism corrupts the "trustworthiness and legitimacy" upon which democracy relies. For trustworthiness, which is central to the just or virtuous life, is needed precisely when it is *not* clearly in one's interest to abide by an agreement or duty. Yet if self-interest trumps virtue, as a public Machiavellianism would hold, then virtue should be pursued only when, and to the extent that, it serves

Timothy Burns *is Assistant Professor of Government at Skidmore College.*

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our interest. (For this reason, one cannot even admit, as Elshtain unfortunately does, the necessity of Machiavellianism in those extreme cases when there is "an unusual or serious threat" to our interests.)

If religion and politics are in this way driven together, one could imagine the liberal responding, perhaps a secular morality could drive them back apart. Why should revealed religion be the source of our citizens' moral guidance? The contributors to this collection make their most valuable arguments in response to this question. Some, like Indianapolis' former mayor Stephen Goldsmith, discovered over time that "true urban strength can only be built on values," and found faith-based organizations to be the most effective "value-shaping organizations." FBOs are therefore "infinitely more capable of handling neighborhood problems than government is." And social science has confirmed that "religion, independent of social class, reduces deviance." John J. DiIulio, Jr.'s social-scientific explanation for this remarkable civic effectiveness of religious faith is that through community outreach, religious organizations provide "positive structured activities" supported by "responsible adults," and play a role as agencies "of local social control" and as allies "in the battle against social pathology." But—leaving aside progressives' likely objection to terms like "deviance," "positive," "responsible," and "control"—one could argue that Boys and Girls Clubs could perform these same functions. What, precisely, causes religion to contribute so successfully to the formation of moral character, while secular organizations fail at it?

The most serious answer is suggested in a foreword by economist Glenn Loury. Explaining his late-discovered interest in religion, Loury notes that theories stemming from "purportedly scientific study of society . . . omit any consideration of what most makes us human—our awareness of our own mortality and our fitful, uncertain, often unsuccessful attempts to give our lives some meaning that just might transcend our pitifully brief existence." Loury likewise notes the "anti-deterministic character" of religious thought and action—its claim that we have the freedom to change our lives, that we can "be moved to make enormous sacrifices on behalf of abstract goals." Jim Wallis' essay connects Loury's two points:

> Faith communities . . . can reestablish a sense of ethics and values. . . . [They] offer people the practical opportunities to love their neighbor, serve their community, contribute to a larger purpose, and sacrifice for something worth believing in. . . . Only the Church has the moral authority and the vocabulary to introduce transcendent concepts of personal worth and the sacredness of life that will . . . inspire responsibility on a personal level. . . . Members of faith communities can be motivated to act on more than just their own self-interest but rather on the basis of the deeply held spiritual and moral values that undergird their faith.

Religion, as James Q. Wilson notes, makes people unsettled with or anxious about their selfish and contradictory selves. The commands of an unfathomable, if just, God remind human beings of something they already sense—that they are leading immoral lives—so that they "finally feel they ought to do something about them." Religious believers come to see their lives as striving to respond to a gift that remains disproportionate to whatever they might be able to accomplish on their own. Hence one can understand why, from a strictly secular political standpoint, religion is so effective in transforming lives, and why among FBOs "the more spiritually demanding programs . . . produce the best results." Secular programs, aimed at strictly worldly ends, seek solutions in worldly means or institutions; they fail to appeal to our deepest longings and the sense of worth or desert born of those longings. FBOs induce guilt; secular programs, viewing guilt merely as one more form of human suffering, seek to eliminate it.

To promote moral virtue for strictly political or secular ends, then, liberal democracy needs religion and has in fact always relied upon it—a reliance that even Thomas Jefferson noticed. (He judged the many religious communities in tolerant states like New York and Pennsylvania "all good enough" to achieve this secular end.) Yet precisely this political use of revealed religion points to a great and long-standing divide in American life. Serious religious believers will object to having their faith reduced to a mere means to secular ends. They recognize that their opponents will assume (as did Jefferson) that if another, better means can be found to make citizens orderly, then revealed religion, that leftover from the dark age of "monkish superstition and ignorance," can and should be dispensed with.

A belief in the progress of the human mind has competed for some time now with belief in Divine Providence. Jefferson's Enlightenment hope in progress continued among America's intellectuals in the nineteenth century thanks to German Idealists, including Marx, who outlined the prospect of a fully rational, atheistic society brought about by impersonal historical forces. Despite the lessons of the twentieth century and the emergence of postmodernism, that hope still beats in the hearts of many American intellectuals. As a result, they remain, as almost all contributors to this volume note, either indifferent to or hostile to religion. To members of mainstream American media educated by

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those intellectuals, conservative religious believers are parochial: hicks, country bumpkins, yahoos, rednecks, the great unwashed.

Although in their Introduction DiIulio and E. J. Dionne, Jr. are silent about the source of this long-standing rift in America, they are confident that the rift, or rather its most recent manifestation, can now be overcome. As Dionne argues in a separate essay, an American "consensus on values" existed prior to the 1960s, but its destruction by liberals caused hitherto apolitical evangelicals to unite with conservative Catholics in a political fight against the new "culture of disbelief." With the exhaustion of both parties in the resulting "culture wars," however, a "new consensus" or "third wave" is now emerging. The two old antagonists, secular progressives and religious conservatives, are becoming more accommodating or accepting of one another.

The essays in this volume are intended to encourage this "third wave," primarily in two ways. One way is to have religious conservatives (Cal Thomas, Ed Dobson, Peter Wehner) warn their brethren away from the siren song of political change; religious conservatives should aim at transforming individuals one at a time, not at reforming nations. The other way is to have religious progressives inform their more secular comrades that many religious people are thoroughly "progressive," and to argue that even evangelicals are progressive in deed if not always in word. So Richard Parker notes that "the Methodists' vision [on the economy] is much more progressive than anything emanating from Democratic Party platforms," and W. Bradford Wilcox and John P. Bartkowski argue that the evangelicals' approach to family life is "in many ways more progressive" than that of most Americans. In short, the political threat from the religious right is fading, evangelicals are becoming part of mainstream progressive America, and religious progressives—an overlooked part of that America—are still strongly engaged in it. It's time for secular progressives to call a truce, these essays argue, and allow the government to form a partnership with FBOs for the sake of our desperately disadvantaged citizens.

Significantly, readers are given no argument warning religious *progressives* to stay out of politics, or inviting unremittingly conservative religious groups to remain involved in it. For behind and informing the editors' optimistic analysis of an emerging "third wave" is the fact that they themselves, at least on the evidence of this book, are religious progressives, believing that "religion's finest hours have been the times when intense belief led to social transformation." The standard they use in judging religions is not the salvation of souls for an eternal and exalted destiny, but this-worldly success, or "progress." How they or any religious progressives manage to synthesize a modern, secular faith in progress with religious faith may be gleaned from Patrick Glynn's essay. Glynn claims that there have been "great leaps of progress in Western politics," a "progressive awakening of conscience" due to the progressive application of an ever more "Christian moral standard to political life." Based on Christianity, the West has "sought to bring life in the earthly city more in line with values of the heavenly city." Dionne and DiIulio wish to insure that it continues to do so.

Odd as it may seem, the success of their attempt to call off the culture wars will depend in part on their ability to persuade secular progressives and religious conservatives that Glynn's thesis is correct—that modern liberal political thought grows out of and marches hand-in-hand with Christianity. (The recent political union of conservative Catholics and evangelical Protestants, we note, depended in part on the Catholic embrace of a version of this thesis found in the thought of John Courtney Murray.) There is considerable reason to doubt that they will be able to do so. For while there is no denying a Christian influence on Western political life, Glynn's thesis is far less evidently true. To many students of political philosophy, in fact, modern liberalism is emphatically not Christian, but part of a broad Enlightenment design to bring about the quiet atrophy of religious faith.

The contributors to this volume are familiar with a recent version of this alternative understanding of modern liberal politics and the Enlightenment: the "secularization theory" of sociologists. As Richard Parker explains, sociologists find that "urbanization, industrialization, scientific explanation, and consumer culture" have always been accompanied by a loss of religious faith. But the more interesting form of this argument can be found long before the advent of sociology, industrialization, or the full flowering of the commercial republic. It is present in Hobbes, Locke, Montesquieu, Constant, Turgot, and many others. Their radical aim in promoting the establishment of the liberal, commercial, industrial society was the destruction of the transcendent, in political or religious forms. This was in turn part of their attempt to overcome the threat posed to science or philosophy from the possible existence of an unfathomable God.

To those who understand the Enlightenment in this way, religious progressives will appear as the unwitting first harvest of the radical Enlightenment. Hence, while Parker may complain that "America's progressive religious community [is] for the most part ignored by those who like to think of themselves as progressive," this studied or embarrassed silence of secular progressives about their religious cousins is not hard for others to understand. After all, progressives embrace the secu-

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lar prospect of achieving happiness on our own in a world bereft of divine care, while the devoutly religious look back to our sinful fall from the well-watered garden in which a beneficent God placed us. To secular progressives, as well as religious conservatives, religious progressivism appears to be an oxymoron. And they might be right. While religious progressives like Parker speak of "the connection between justice and the divine," they explain this as the religious progressives' call to "witness for more than immediate or personal advantage" and their willingness "to fight for a world beyond this parsimonious age of ours." These statements, while still vaguely religious, suggest secular inroads on traditional Christian beliefs.

To bolster their claim that biblical faith, far from being the target of the Enlightenment, is the deep source of all that is good in the modern world, the religious progressives in this collection are compelled to note that America has proven to be an "exception" to secularization theory. Surveys show, for example, that far more of us are "churched" now than in 1776, and that "our country is the most religiously vibrant in the world." Parker, appealing to his fellow progressives, goes so far as to note that even Marx noticed that Americans were different. Parker quotes from "On the Jewish Question": "We find that [American] religion not only exists, but displays a fresh and vigorous vitality." As secular progressives know, however, Marx did not applaud this fact. He saw the vitality as somewhat bogus, since the privatization of religion, the cause of this result, was already producing a boutique religiosity. What Marx objected to was that it was still religiosity at all; a product of alienation, it would end only with the end of alienation, the triumph of atheism in the proletariat revolution.

More significantly, in a short but valuable essay Richard N. Ostling warns that the alleged American exceptionalism is skin deep: over time, "long-established Protestant denominations tend to become more liberal in doctrine," and the old Fundamentalist institutions (like Bob Jones University) die out. So too the post-Vatican II Catholic Church has become "a federation of internally divided quasi-denominations." Above all, younger Americans are "increasingly detached from traditional Christian concepts" (as, we might add, are young Jews from orthodoxy). If they weren't half-secularized themselves, religious progressives would be more aware that secularization is proceeding apace in America.

The arguments of other contributors help us to see the breadth of such secularization in America, and hence why the division between religious faith and progressivism is not so easily overcome. The problem is most visible in the social sciences, upon which so much of our public policy and our social services have come to rely. Glenn Loury, for example, reminds us that "until social science takes . . . [the religious] aspect of the human drama with the utmost seriousness," it will not do justice to its subjects or will be unscientific. Yet one could wonder whether Loury himself, who speaks of "the process of belief *construction*" and of humans as "*generators* of meaning," is not failing to do justice to his subjects. Thoughtful religious believers, after all, must find these terms blasphemous. And the terms might well be traced back to the early modern scientific attempt to "construct" a world so that it could be known without any recourse to an unfathomable God of revelation. In any event, like so much contemporary social science jargon (the self, identity, culture, mindset, values, ego, etc.), the terms Loury uses have become part of social science's deliberate attempt to explain in strictly immanent terms (and hence to explain away) what religious believers hold to be not merely a human creation, but divinely revealed truth.

The professionalization of social work during America's progressive era entailed adopting the findings, and hence the jargon, of the social sciences. As a result, the work of caring for human and social needs became deeply secular in character if not intention. As Ram Cnaan and Gaynor I. Yancey point out, social work was soon "distanced from faith-based services." The goal of social workers became the elimination of all suffering; their characteristic virtue is now "humanity," not Christian charity—the virtue of Princess Di, not of Mother Teresa. In churches, by contrast, as Jim Wallis argues, the organizing style is "covenental," not "contractual." That is, the goal of their outreach programs is not external to the virtuous activity (which would make that activity a mere means); rather the virtuous deeds (and *not* an end to all suffering) are themselves the ends.

This is particularly so, of course, in conservative churches. As Cnaan and Yancey discovered, in politically and theologically liberal churches cutbacks in government spending prompted the creation of social programs. In conservative churches, by contrast, such cutbacks didn't spur such programs; the programs were already in place, owing to the parishioners' desire to "witness their faith." Liberal churches act to take up the slack in social services until they can convince government to restore them. Not wishing to hold the disadvantaged responsible for their plight, they understand their own work not as a divinely imposed responsibility, but as an act of humanity. Their eyes are on the ends (wiping out poverty), not on the virtuous activity itself. They prefer what Melissa Rogers calls "a communal sharing of burdens," and object to an emphasis on the "personal responsibility" that all virtue requires. The adoption of professional social work by mainstream

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Protestant churches has secularized them. And this has not gone unnoticed by conservative churches.

Among those who call it to our attention in this collection are Ronald J. Sider and Heidi Rolland. Their essay not only offers the most powerful challenge to progressive secularists and half-secular religious organizations, but in doing so points to one way in which the editors' "third wave" might be brought about: through the capitulation of the secular Enlightenment. Sider and Rolland argue in favor of the Charitable Choice section of the 1996 Welfare Reform Act by arguing against the second part of the Supreme Court's *Lemon* test. That test, which requires that in their primary effects statutes neither advance nor inhibit religion, has put pressure on religious agencies receiving public funds "to secularize their programs," leaving the more strictly religious programs bereft of funding. The result, claim Sider and Rolland, is that "the pervasively sectarian standard has . . . constituted a genuine, though more subtle, establishment of religion, because it supports one type of religious worldview while penalizing holistic beliefs."

This grave and apparently bizarre claim may make perfect sense to members of religious organizations who have seen their cash-strapped outreach programs suffer while more secularized programs like Catholic Charities feed freely at the government trough. Others (especially those unfamiliar with the recent "equal treatment" literature) will need to have the charge explained. Sider and Rolland accordingly argue that secularists have an implicitly religious or "quasi-religious perspective." Strictly secular programs, they claim, "are not religiously neutral."

> Implicitly, purely "secular" programs convey the message that nonreligious technical knowledge and skills are sufficient to address social problems such as low job skills and single parenthood. Implicitly, they teach the irrelevance of a spiritual dimension to human life. Although secular programs may not explicitly uphold the tenets of philosophical naturalism and the belief that nothing exists except the natural order, implicitly they support such a worldview. Rather than being religiously neutral, "secular" programs implicitly convey a set of naturalistic beliefs about the nature of persons and ultimate reality that serve the same function as religion. Vast public funding of only secular programs means government bias in favor of one particular quasi-religious perspective, namely, philosophic naturalism.

At present, when government funding goes to religious organizations with outreach programs, the funding compels religious organizations to half embrace this secular faith—to adopt the view that "people may need God for their spiritual well-being, but that their social problems can be addressed exclusively through medical and social science methods." Implicitly, "such a worldview teaches . . . a particular understanding of God and persons, by addressing people's social needs independently of their spiritual nature." This particular religious outlook compartmentalizes God and spiritual nurture. Hence, "limiting government funds to allegedly 'secular' programs actually offers preferential treatment to one specific religious worldview." It excludes more traditional or conservative religions from government funding. The latter, which Sider and Rolland call "holistic faith-based" agencies,

> operate on the belief that no area of a person's life, whether psychological, physical, social, or economic, can be adequately addressed in isolation from the spiritual. Agencies operating out of this worldview consider the explicitly spiritual components of their programs—used in conjunction with conventional secular social service methods—as fundamental to their ability to achieve the secular social goals desired by the government.

By requiring the secularization of faith-based social programs, the *Lemon* test has brought about an establishment of religion. The authors believe Charitable Choice will restore religious neutrality, allowing funds to flow to all religious and quasi-religious worldviews.

Sider and Rolland's argument is, to be sure, not without its difficulties. They claim that for holistic faith-based agencies, "no area of a person's life . . . can be adequately addressed in isolation from the spiritual." It is hard to see how any activity can escape being called "inherently religious" for such an organization. Yet the authors claim that such agencies will not use government money "for inherently religious activities." This means that, if they are honest, holistic faith-based agencies will never use government money. And it is hard to gainsay Melissa Rogers' concern that enforcing Charitable Choice's safeguards against sectarian preference will bring about unconstitutional "church-state entanglements."

But these difficulties fall away if the authors are correct in their use of the equivocal term "religious worldview." For if "philosophic naturalism," either in its full-blown explicit variety or in the variety that is accepted by religiously affiliated but inherently secular agencies, is indeed "religious" or "quasi-religious," then science or philosophy is not what it claims to be. It is based not on reason but on faith. This, indeed, is the claim of Sider

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and Rolland: "That nothing exists except the natural order" is "the belief" of secular philosophic naturalists. If modern philosophic naturalism is indeed a belief, Sider and Rolland's case against current practice as constituting "establishment of religion" is irrefutable. If secularists wish to refute their claim, they will have to do something that none of their intellectual habits have prepared them to do. They have for a long time now ceased to examine their fundamental assumption that a secularized, humanized, demystified, non-transcendent world is one that can fully satisfy human beings, who need only security from violent death, sufficient material goods, mutual reciprocal recognition, and psychological therapeutics to be fully content.

But as the contributors to this volume point out, there is compelling evidence to suggest that the secular world, from its affluent suburbs to its inner-city neighborhoods, is not satisfying, and is destructive of a genuine humanity. Secular progressives, with their faith in progress now made seriously questionable by what is daily before their eyes, must set aside all their old saws about religious superstition and ignorance, all their moralistic sneering, and face again the question: Why *should* science or reason be our guide? If they cannot answer this fundamental question—if they are reduced to saying that they have a *faith* in reason—then they will have to grant that these two authors are perfectly justified in claiming that our First Amendment jurisprudence has been "supporting one type of religious worldview." They would then have no ground for opposing a new partnership between religious organizations and government. The Enlightenment will have capitulated to religious faith.

The alternative way for Dionne and DiIulio's "third wave" to emerge, of course, would be for religious conservatives to become secular by becoming "progressive." Is this in the cards? The editors point with understandable hope to the change among conservative religious believers on matters of civil rights, as conservatives came to realize that racial and gender inequality did not correspond to the message of the gospel. But as the editors are compelled to note, "many who welcome the prophetic role of the churches in movements to abolish slavery, promote civil rights, and secure social justice are skeptical of applying religion's prophetic voice to matters such as abortion, sexuality, or family life."

This is indeed the new flashpoint of the old struggle; if the mayor of Cincinnati relies on religions to "teach our youth about citizenship, civility, charity, and a host of other values," what happens when those "other values" include obedience, humility, and chastity? As Cnaan and Yancey gently put it, "Some of the religious groups that provide social services adhere to values that are not popular and can be offensive to some groups."

The editors do not say how this matter will be resolved. They surely do not believe that progressives will become convinced that in the 1960s liberation was *erroneously* extended to sexual matters, that the dynamic of liberation mysteriously halts there. A restoration of "pre-sixties consensus on values" would seem "reactionary" to a progressive. Liberation rests on the premise that the moral or ethical rules by which we live are a mere means to the security and comfort required for the individual's subjectively held version of the good life. It was therefore only a matter of time before the demand to relax or throw off restraints on "victimless crimes" found enough intellectual proponents to make it a political reality.

Are religious conservatives, then, to adopt looser sexual mores, abortion on demand, and a new understanding of the family? That too is unlikely, since such a change would differ in kind from their adoption of the agenda of the civil rights movement; it would require conservatives to adopt the sovereign autonomy of the individual. It is of course *possible* that religious conservatives will do so.

This prospect is limned in Wilcox and Bartkowski's article on the egalitarian, "progressive" tendencies of evangelical families. Evangelical men, it seems, are "empathetic and affectionate" husbands and "warm, expressive" and "involved" fathers. Since the authors believe these qualities originated with Dr. Benjamin Spock, they find their appearance among evangelicals significant. They attribute it to feminist pressures and to "an outgrowth of the increasingly therapeutic character of American evangelicalism more generally," i.e., the attempt to serve every imaginable psychological need of members. This may be so, though Tocqueville noted the tendency toward informal, affectionate, and egalitarian family relations in American democracy's families long before Dr. Spock ever called for them. It may also be, as Wilcox and Bartkowski claim, that a change in evangelicals' familial behavior was facilitated by a recent rhetorical shift: "The ideal of male authority has evolved from one of 'headship' to 'servant-leadership.'" But this "discursive innovation" appears to have begun some two thousand years ago.

Perhaps it will do some good for our intellectual class to hear that those whom they have been demonizing for so long are very different from their nightmares. More significant would be the adoption by religious conservatives of the vocabulary in which that secular message is delivered, for it would redefine the standards for the religious believer: "good" would then have become whatever is "progressive." Should this occur, religious conservatives will not only change their

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understanding of human sexuality. They will also come to be proud to have the mayor of Baltimore explain how he turned the clergy of his city into lobbyists for a needle exchange program. They will beam when the mayor of Indianapolis explains how his city "outsources" its poverty programs to their churches. Religious conservatives will at long last have become important players in the modern progressive project. Whether, when they have thus forgotten eternity, or exchanged it for secular recognition, we will all be better off is, of course, another question. It is the great virtue of this collection to have made that question, which lies at the heart of the culture wars, clear to its readers. FT

The Libertine Against Abortion

(after Ovid, *Amores* II.13)

My rash Corinna lies near death,
her belly bleeding from the life she wrenched away.
Stupid, stupid girl—your breath
should bear the dueling cries of love, not lonely pain.
I'd spank you if I had you near:
across my knee, switch back your skirt . . . O foolish girl,
my anger falls before my fear
that I will lose your golden skin, your laughing eyes,
your kiss, your arch, your sigh, your fold.
And I'm to blame you felt the spring of life within—
or so, at least, I'm forced to hold:
What has sufficient cause we must conceive as so.
Desire only desire sates,
my ripe Corinna, what did you expect? Perfection
overflows, and love creates
itself in recreation. Your fresh life aroused
the life in me, and life—refreshed—
came back to you. How could we reject the gift
we labored for while our lives meshed?
O Goddess of Birth, Ilithyia, who comforts women
through the pain that makes life new,
forgive the girl who tried to flee from your embrace,
and sparing her, thus spare me too.
I'll fill your shrine with votive gifts inscribed "For Life."
Contrite before your altar's door,
I'll kneel—with virgin oil and fertile grain—to vow
that when she's well, we'll try once more.

J. Bottum

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The Christianity of Philosophy

Peter Simpson

The title of this essay is meant to be rather startling, and more startling than the phrase "Christian philosophy" which provoked no little controversy some few years ago. That phrase was introduced by the medievalist Étienne Gilson to describe the contributions to philosophy of such thinkers as St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Bonaventure. Gilson conceded to opponents that there could no more be a Christian philosophy, in the strict sense of the term, than a Christian mathematics or a Christian physics. All these studies were, in their formal idea, unconnected with matters of religious belief. But he insisted that as a matter of concrete historical fact the lived Christianity of certain medieval figures had led them to philosophical developments and discoveries that would not have been developed or discovered otherwise. In this sense, he declared, there could be Christian philosophies. It is not my intention to enter again on this controversy here. I draw attention to it merely to show how different my own topic of discussion is from Gilson's. Gilson was concerned with the question whether there can be a philosophy that is Christian. I am concerned with the question whether there can be a philosophy that is not Christian.

Now this may seem a wholly bizarre question and one that it is easy to answer. For surely not only was Gilson right that philosophy is different from religion in its very idea, but also as a matter of historical fact there are many philosophies in the world that are not at all Christian. One thinks immediately of those of ancient Greece, China, and India, of those of the medieval Jewish and Islamic worlds, and of most of the philosophies of the modern day too. Well, perhaps. But I think my thesis, with a few qualifications, can be made to stand.

PETER SIMPSON *is Professor of Philosophy and Classics at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York.*

When philosophy is said to differ in its formal idea from religion, especially a professedly revealed religion like Christianity, what is typically meant is that philosophy is the study of things as they can be known by the light of unaided reason while religion, or, more precisely, theology, is the study of things as they can be known by the light of supernatural revelation. Clearly, if this is the way philosophy and religion are being understood then there is and can be no formal overlap between the two studies. There can, at most, be the sort of historical overlap in the concrete existence of individual thinkers that Gilson mentions and argues for. I want, however, to question this way of understanding philosophy or this way of defining its essential idea. For that definition is not and never was the definition of philosophy as that term was typically understood, at least up until the modern period.

Let me begin with the second-century Christian saint, Justin Martyr. Gilson appealed to Justin Martyr in his own discussion, but failed, in my view, to take Justin's views seriously enough. Gilson, along with all the others involved in the controversy over Christian philosophy, was too wedded to the formal definition just mentioned to see that it did not apply in the case of Justin. Gilson recalls, for instance, how Justin went about from one professed philosopher to another in search of God and wisdom until he found an old man who instructed him in the teaching of the prophets and the Gospels. Justin came to the conclusion that this was the only sure and profitable philosophy and he describes his conversion to Christianity as his becoming a philosopher.

It is evident from this, and from other texts, that Justin was not using the word "philosophy" in a way that distinguished it from the Christian faith. On the con-

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trary, the Christian faith for him was the true and complete philosophy. It was what he had been looking for all along, and indeed what all philosophers had been looking for all along, namely the sure and true path of wisdom. Refusing to become a Christian was, for Justin, the same as refusing to remain a philosopher, and remaining a philosopher was ultimately the same as becoming a Christian. Moreover, and for the same reason, all philosophers before the coming of Christ were in some way already anticipating Christianity, and Christ was already, albeit in hidden ways, at work in the philosophers. What the prophets were to the Jews, the philosophers were to the Gentiles: forerunners sent by God to prepare the way for Christ. Indeed, did not the Gospel say that Christ was the Logos of God and the true light that enlightens all men? How then could it not have been Christ who had been illuminating the minds of the philosophers all these years, and how could it not have been Christ whom the philosophers, in seeking after wisdom, were really trying to find?

We should especially note about Justin's understanding of philosophy its contrast with Gilson's. For where Gilson defines philosophy by its *instruments*, Justin defines it by its *end*. Gilson limits philosophy to truths that can be known by means of reason on its own, but Justin includes under philosophy the whole of wisdom however it is found, whether by human speculation or as a revelation from God. That is why he understands Christianity as the true philosophy, the true "love of wisdom"—Christianity is the love of Christ and Christ is complete wisdom, the Logos of God who is Truth incarnate.

For Justin, therefore, as a self-professed lover of wisdom, what mattered was not *how* he found wisdom but *whether* he found it. The same must surely be true of any and every lover of wisdom. As Plato makes Socrates say already in the *Republic*, if someone is rightly said to love something then he loves the whole of it and not a part only. For what lover, who could not reach his love by his own strength and resources, would refuse the assistance of another who promised to bring him to his love by that other's strength and resources? Or how genuine would the love of such a lover be if he gave up reaching his love because he could not get there on his own but only with another's help?

Justin is perfectly typical among ancient authors in his understanding of philosophy. Ancient philosophy, from its beginnings in Greece, is always presented as a way of life, even of salvation. Of course philosophers had doctrines, and different doctrines; but they were committed to their particular doctrines or schools precisely because they saw them as guides to the best way of conducting themselves in the world. Philosophy was the way to enjoy the best and happiest life human nature allowed. Their pursuit was wisdom, and they pursued wisdom however they could, even giving up their lives and fortunes to the task. Wisdom was their "pearl of great price" for which they sold all that they had.

One thinks first and naturally of Socrates in Plato's *Apology*, but most of those whom we call pre-Socratics were no different. One only has to think of how these pre-Socratics look upon their philosophy as an escape and release from the ignorance and folly in which the rest of mankind, the unphilosophic mass, lies imprisoned. We often obscure this fact to ourselves by saying that the pre-Socratics were the first scientists and by contrasting their approach to understanding the world with that of poets and other tellers of tales about the gods. But this is misleading if the suggestion is meant to be, as it often is, that the pre-Socratics were thereby separating themselves and their reasoning from religion and religious faith. We indeed may contrast philosophy and science against religion and faith; but the pre-Socratics did not. The reputed founder of philosophy, Thales, believed as much in the gods as any pagan. Parmenides presents his own teaching as a revelation from a goddess, which would make it, according to our categories, religion and not philosophy. Even Xenophanes, who first criticized the traditional tales about the gods, was not replacing religion with reason but with another religion, exchanging an absurd and immoral religion for a sane and moral one; yet a sane and moral religion is, according to us, still religion and not philosophy. When we skip from the pre-Socratics to Plato we find very much the same. He follows Xenophanes in rejecting traditional myths and in substituting rational deities for irrational. He also understands philosophy as an all-embracing way of life or path of salvation and as culminating in some sort of worship of the divine.

Of course the pre-Socratics, Socrates, and Plato were doing something new that the poets had not done. But what they did, as John Paul II reminded us in his encyclical *Fides et Ratio*, was not to reject religion or faith but to introduce reason into religion and faith. Greek religion was very fluid and tolerant of novelties. The philosophers simply appealed to reason in their faith instead of to traditional tales or personal interest or realpolitik. A classic instance is Plato's dialogue *Euthyphro*, where the difference between Socrates and Euthyphro is not that Euthyphro is pious and Socrates is not but that Socrates uses his head in his piety while Euthyphro uses anything but his head.

What is true of Plato and Socrates is just as true of Aristotle. It is true also of all the philosophic schools of the Greek and Roman world—Stoics, Epicureans, Neoplatonists—in whom indeed the most obvious feature is

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their religious and salvific character. The philosophers, we might say, were *more* serious about religion than most of their fellows, since they insisted on using their reason for this purpose instead of relying blindly on their hopes and fears.

Viewed in this light Justin must be looked on as a fellow philosopher, a fellow seeker after wisdom, and the Christianity he embraced must be looked on as another school of philosophy. That Christianity also claimed to be a teaching given by God Himself come for this purpose in human form does not make it, according to the ancient understanding, any the less a philosophy or any the less attractive as a philosophy. Indeed, if anything its claim to be a revelation from God would make it more attractive. Since the divine is manifestly better than the human, divine wisdom is better than human wisdom. Certainly Parmenides would have had no problem with this, nor would Socrates. For he who declared at his trial that he had learned through his obedience to the Delphic Oracle that human wisdom was of little worth would not have spurned the gift of divine wisdom if the Oracle had offered it to him.

This is why Justin is such an important witness to how Christianity first presented itself to the pagan philosophers—and how it won them over. For Christianity came on the scene as complete wisdom, available in this life as a free gift from the same God that the philosophers had always claimed to love and to be pursuing. The philosophic spirits who came to see this, among whom Justin is a prime instance, embraced Christianity *as philosophy and as philosophers.* There was no conflict or division for them between philosophy and religion, philosophy and faith. Indeed how could there be? Wisdom was what, as philosophers, they had always wanted. How then could it matter to them if wisdom was to be received as a free gift from God and not as a result of their own speculations?

This attitude of Justin towards Christianity and his identifying of Christianity with philosophy, true philosophy, continues in his contemporaries and successors, such as Athenagoras, Irenaeus, Minucius Felix, Clement, and outstandingly, of course, St. Augustine. Thus it is that the ultimate triumph of Christianity and the eventual decline and disappearance of the ancient pagan philosophic schools is viewed as the triumph of philosophy itself. This was the triumph of Christ who is Wisdom, and of the love of Christ that is the love of Wisdom. The other philosophies ended, therefore, not by way of cessation but by way of completion; they were succeeded not by new pagan schools, but by Christian theology. There was no break between philosophy and theology, just as there was no break between the prophets and the Gospels. There was only fulfillment and realization.

Such at any rate is how the history of philosophy must appear to a Justin or an Augustine or indeed to any reflective Christian of like mind. Of course this is not how the history of philosophy is standardly presented these days. On the contrary, philosophy is often considered to have ceased rather than to have been superseded after the ascendance of Christianity, not to be revived until around the time of Descartes, when the hegemonic power of an authoritarian Church had begun to decline. This understanding of the history of philosophy distorts ancient philosophy, seeing it as a set of doctrines covering a certain range of subjects somewhat loosely connected, rather than as a comprehensive way to salvation. Ancient philosophy, in this distorting narrative, is seen as an anticipation, albeit rather primitive at times, of what we call philosophy now. But what we call philosophy now has little more than the name in common with philosophy as it existed in the ancient world. We are confronted by a serious problem of equivocation.

The equivocation is not entirely accidental; indeed it has its roots in the philosophy of the ancient schools as they were first rivaled and then absorbed by Christianity. For while, as I have stressed, philosophy just meant love of wisdom, the fact that Christianity claimed to be, in the form of divine gift, *the* wisdom thus loved forced Christians in particular to wonder how much of this wisdom was or could be known prior to the gift.

Some early Christian writers took the bold step of saying that the Greek philosophers, and Plato in particular, had gotten their philosophy from the Old Testament through contact with Jews. Hence philosophy could be reduced to biblical prophecy and treated in the same way, namely, as elements of divine revelation about the future coming of Christ. But this was an unsatisfactory solution, partly because of lack of evidence about early Greek knowledge of the Bible, and partly because it left open the question of whether anything could in principle be known without any prior revelation. For human reason did exist after all and, moreover, as the opening of St. John's Gospel seemed to make clear, received its light from Christ at the very origin of its being. So what was the relation between the light of Christ that "enlightens every man . . . coming into the world" and the light of Christ present in the gospel? The answer became part of Christian apologetics: the thought of the philosophers contained, not the gospel, but a preparation for the gospel, not the faith, but "preambles" to the faith. The whole was still wisdom and the love of it was still philosophy as love of wisdom. But there was a difference between the complete wisdom revealed by God and the preambles to this wisdom discovered by the pre-Christian philosophers.

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Of course no true lover of wisdom, no true philosopher, could rest content with the preambles when wisdom itself was available. Philosophy, therefore, in its complete sense, or with respect to its ultimate longing, was still understood as identical with revealed Christian wisdom. But the philosophy that the ancient philosophers had managed to reach was and could only be understood as the preambles to this wisdom. There was a natural tendency, therefore, to call the preambles themselves philosophy, since that was all that the philosophers had actually achieved. But further, since the philosophers had achieved this using their reason alone, or using only the natural light from Christ (for the revealed light was not yet given), there was a natural tendency to identify the philosophy of the philosophers, as opposed to the philosophy of the Christians, with what can be known by natural reason. At the same time, there was a natural tendency to identify the philosophy of the Christians with theology or revealed theology. In the end this distinction became fully formalized and clarified, so that while theology came to be what could be known with the light of revelation, philosophy came to be, not just what the pagan philosophers *had* known by reason, but what they might have known because it is knowable by unaided reason, even if no philosopher had in fact known it or known it very well. St. Thomas Aquinas was perhaps the Christian theologian who most clearly and succinctly formalized this distinction. One of the consequences was that it became possible for Christian theologians to discover rational conclusions that no philosopher had discovered and yet for these truths to be strictly "philosophical," that is, accessible to reason alone (and this is in part what Gilson had in mind by what he called Christian philosophy).

Philosophy in this narrow sense, where it is, for purposes of formal clarification, identified with the preambles to Christian wisdom, was reached by prescinding from the lived context of ancient philosophy and from the lived love of wisdom that motivated ancient philosophers. It was, and was meant to be, an abstraction. But the Christian theologians who formalized the abstraction did not love wisdom differently from the pagans or pursue wisdom any less passionately. On the contrary, the pursuit and the love were massively reinforced by Christianity, since the wisdom that is Christ became the pursued and the loved. Moreover the abstraction was not of philosophy from something else, but of philosophy from philosophy: the philosophy accessible to unaided reason from the more complete philosophy revealed by Christ.

Philosophy understood as what is accessible to unaided reason is, in its full formalization, an abstraction fashioned during the Middle Ages, above all by Christian theologians. It cannot be found in the ancient world, nor in the early Christian world, nor in much of Judaism and Islam. Yet this is the sense of philosophy that has now come to dominate in our modern world, and it is practitioners of this philosophy who fill the teaching posts in the schools and universities. They it is also who write the books, especially the books that describe and analyze the so-called "history of philosophy," from which most people learn about philosophy.

One should not be too surprised, therefore, if the other and original sense of philosophy—as a way of life and a path to wisdom and salvation—has been almost entirely lost to view. For few there are who consider philosophy to be a path to salvation, let alone live out their philosophy as such. There are plenty of Christians around, of course, and Jews and Muslims too, who try to live out their faith and who are, to this extent, the authentic counterparts today of ancient philosophic practice. But we do not dream of calling them philosophers anymore. Nor do modern practitioners of philosophy who also espouse such faith think of themselves as philosophers insofar as they do espouse it. Philosophy, both in theory and practice, has become thoroughly abstracted from the living out of a way of salvation. It has instead become an academic subject and the practice of it a job or profession.

Philosophy did not exist like this in the past, not even in the medieval world that constructed the modern idea of philosophy—to say nothing of the ancient world. The abstraction of philosophy was never more than a formal idea; it was not a lived reality. The lived reality, within which philosophy was always concretely practiced, was Christianity or some other religion expressly claiming to be a way of salvation. What happened in the modern world is that the formal abstraction was made concrete. This was essentially achieved by keeping the philosophic practice but rejecting the religious context. The practice became instead this-worldly and secular. One would expect a religious context to be otherworldly, of course, but philosophy when practiced as a way of life is always otherworldly, in the sense that it is not focused on immediate goals like money, pleasure, fame, and so forth. True philosophers know these goals are too low to be the focus of a way of life. The only adequate goal of philosophy is philosophy itself, or the pursuit of wisdom and knowledge for its own sake. Anyone who makes his life revolve around such pursuit has chosen an otherworldly life, even if the expectation of a life after this one is not added in.

Modern philosophy is typically said to begin with Descartes. On the whole this is true, but not for the reasons usually given. Descartes was not restoring philosophy after a thousand-year interruption during the Middle Ages. Philosophy in its original sense flour-

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ished as much or more during the Middle Ages than before, because it flourished in Christian wisdom, and in Jewish and Islamic wisdom too. What Descartes in fact did was to take part of this wisdom, the part that had, for technical purposes, been called philosophy, and remove it from its theological and religious context. He removed it, that is to say, from the context where it was still continuous with a way of life and of salvation or with the life-long love of wisdom. In other words he made it expressly this-worldly. So much is evident from the fact that he made it serve the cause of the new science and that he made the new science, as he says in his *Discourse on Method*, serve the cause of the conquest of nature for human comfort.

Descartes was not, therefore, a philosopher in the traditional sense. At least he was not so in his explicit philosophizing (what he was in the secret of his own heart is another matter). He used philosophy in the sense abstracted by the medieval theologians, not for the sake of wisdom or theology, but for the sake of worldly success. To this extent his philosophizing bears more of a resemblance to that of the ancient sophists, who did not pursue philosophy as a way of life but used it rather as a means to wealth and reputation.

Descartes, however, was not alone. There were many others at about the same time who followed the same path. The emergence of philosophy as an academic subject, abstracted from the context of a way of life, is due to them. For of the two moments of medieval wisdom, theology and philosophy, the theological moment was of no or little value to Descartes because it was not *useful* or not this-worldly. Academic philosophy as we now know it was born as the concretizing of a medieval abstraction and indeed also as the handmaid of technological science for the conquest of nature. The history of modern philosophy is the history of that concretized abstraction and of that handmaid.

But an abstraction is an abstraction and to concretize it is willy-nilly to put it into a context. Hence as a matter of fact academic philosophers will have a context for their philosophizing. It will serve some end. Perhaps in some cases it will serve the end of philosophy or wisdom itself, in which case it will be like ancient philosophy and hence also like religion. The philosophizing of a Hegel or a Heidegger would seem to be of this sort (though we might question how wise is the supposed wisdom that results). In other cases, however, it will serve whatever end the philosopher in question adopts for his life: wealth, pleasure, fame, or just plain making ends meet.

For the most part, in fact, that does seem to be how philosophy today actually gets used. It is just another sort of profession, like being a stockbroker or a businessman. It has lost what John Paul II calls in *Fides et Ratio* its "sapiential dimension," its dimension as wisdom and as living for the sake of wisdom. To restore that dimension does not require, however, that we give up the medieval abstraction, nor indeed that we give up the idea of philosophy as a profession. Nor of course is that what John Paul II wants either. He uses the medieval abstraction in *Fides et Ratio* regularly, much as we all do now when speaking of philosophy. For the abstraction is after all an important one that introduces necessary clarifications into our thinking. Indeed I would call the abstraction a real discovery of Christian philosophy in Gilson's sense—a discovery by grace-filled reason of something that belongs to unaided reason. Moreover, once the abstraction has been made, there can be nothing wrong in choosing to concentrate one's professional activity on philosophy and not also on its sapiential completion in theology. For the two are formally separate and can be pursued separately.

Rather what philosophy requires is what true religion has always required of human beings—not a change in profession but a change in person. Whether we profess philosophy or theology or neither, whether we are in religious life or not, our persons and our lives should serve the ultimate goal of wisdom. We should all be philosophers in the original sapiential sense that John Paul II so much speaks of, but we need not all be philosophers in the abstract medieval sense. We can have Descartes as our guide, if we like, for what it means to *do* philosophy. But we should have Justin Martyr as our guide for what it means to *be* a philosopher. FT

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Narrating Ethics

Alan Jacobs

Recently my eight-year-old son came home from school in (atypical) frustration: a project from his art class was proving unexpectedly recalcitrant and, in his judgment, was taking up far too much of his valuable time. After relating the sad tale, he cried out, "What's the point of Art, anyway?"

Ah yes, the Platonic question—we all come around to it eventually. What indeed is the point of art? What is it good for? And most of us know Plato's answer: it's not good for much. It carries us ever farther away from the truth that can be known properly only through a dialectical (question-and-answer) encounter that allows us to recollect the inbred knowledge which, in this ever-changing world, we have forgotten. Moreover, art, especially literary art, consists mostly of lies. Better to follow the sure, though rigorous, route of philosophy if it's truth that one is after.

Yet despite the Platonic warnings, philosophers—especially moral philosophers, and others concerned with the great question of how we should live—have typically found literary art, at least, quite useful. Even Plato himself showed no reluctance to elaborate a tale when, in his judgment, the situation called for it. And virtually any basic philosophy textbook one could name will have a number of literary "examples" or "illustrations" (these terms, as we shall see, need to be thought about) of philosophical themes, questions, and issues.

Likewise, the University of Notre Dame Press has recently published five volumes under the general heading of The Ethics of Everyday Life, and, naturally, the books are well stocked with selections from literary works that the editors deem germane to the general topic at hand, whether that topic is work, courtship and marrying, teaching, or dying. Timothy Fuller's volume on *Leading and Leadership* is the only exception: just a handful of its selections are literary. Among the others, one-third to one-half of the selections are literary, even under a fairly strict definition of the term that excludes philosophical and theological essays with considerable literary merit. As I say, one would expect such mining of literature for memorable characters, scenes, phrases, and events. But, however common the practice is, it may be worth thinking about for a while. Why do we expect such mining? And what do we expect it will do for us, the readers? In thematic anthologies of this type, what's the point of Art?

Alan Jacobs *is Professor of English at Wheaton College.*

The Ethics of Everyday Life

Leading and Leadership. Edited by Timothy Fuller. *University of Notre Dame Press. 264 pp. $25 cloth, $15 paper.*

Wing to Wing, Oar to Oar: Readings on Courting and Marrying. Edited by Amy A. Kass and Leon R. Kass. *University of Notre Dame Press. 630 pp. $25 cloth, $15 paper.*

The Eternal Pity: Reflections on Dying. Edited by Richard John Neuhaus. *University of Notre Dame Press. 200 pp. $25 cloth, $15 paper.*

Working: Its Meaning and Its Limits. Edited by Gilbert Meilaender. *University of Notre Dame Press. 288 pp. $25 cloth, $15 paper.*

Everyone a Teacher. Edited by Mark Schwehn. *University of Notre Dame Press. 392 pp. $25 cloth, $15 paper.*

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A common answer to our question might go something like this: thematic anthologies are organized around *abstract* topics that need to be *illustrated* with literary *examples* because those examples are more *concrete* and therefore more comprehensible to the common reader. Indeed, such an answer is so familiar as to be beyond controversy, but for that very reason we should spend some time thinking about its categories and assumptions. All of the italicized words imply, or enact, a particular view of knowledge and understanding: the view that the general categories are more substantive (at least philosophically or in terms of reflection) than the "examples." That is, the hidden assumption of this way of talking is that if readers had sufficient philosophical training, and sufficient clarity of mind, the "examples" would be unnecessary.

It was precisely this view of knowledge that, more than two hundred years ago, provoked the philosopher David Hume to write essays. In his explanatory "Of Essay Writing," he begins by making a distinction between the "learned" and the "conversible" branches of society.

> The learned are such as have chosen for their portion the higher and more difficult operations of the mind, which require leisure and solitude, and cannot be brought to perfection without long preparation and severe labor. The conversible world join to a sociable disposition, and a taste of pleasure, an inclination to the easier and more gentle exercises of the understanding, to obvious reflections on human affairs and the duties of common life, and to the observation of the blemishes or perfections of the particular objects that surround them.

Hume finds the learned world to be dominated and populated almost exclusively by men, while women are "the sovereigns of the empire of conversation" (though men also dwell, as subjects, in that world). The task that Hume sets himself in his essays is to draw the two worlds together, for he laments their severance:

> The separation of the learned from the conversible world seems to have been the great defect of the last age, and must have had a very bad influence both on books and company: for what possibility is there of finding topics of conversation fit for the entertainment of rational creatures without having recourse sometimes to history, poetry, politics, and the more obvious principles, at least, of philosophy? Must our whole discourse be a continued series of gossiping stories and idle remarks?

Thus Hume's decision to write "literary" essays for poorly educated but "conversible" women; whereas the learned men, accustomed to "the higher and more difficult operations of the mind," could proceed to the "severe labor" of reading Hume's philosophical treatises—though with the occasional break to enjoy the pleasures of feminine society. What the conversibles get from this deal is knowledge; what the learned get is social polish and the opportunity to disseminate knowledge to a crowd incapable of acquiring it for themselves. The role of the literary essay is to expedite this meeting of very different worlds, and to help dissipate the inevitable friction between them.

One could cite any number of current examples of this attitude towards literature, but let's take just one, from the political philosopher Ronald Beiner's book *What's the Matter with Liberalism?* Beiner makes my point especially nicely because the "Prologue" to his book, called "The Theorist as Storyteller," is a defense of "the narrative dimension of our quest for truth." Beiner argues that to consider theorizing as a mode of storytelling is not to diminish theory, but to enhance and embolden it. However, Beiner is quick to say, theoretical storytelling is not to be confused with the philosophical use of fiction. "Theory may well incorporate fiction . . . but it needn't do so, and in any case its use of fiction is certainly subordinate to the very different purposes of theory." Beiner takes care not to "dissolve the distinction between theoretical and literary activity." Thus what may superficially appear to be a respectful attitude toward literature proves, upon examination, to be thoroughly patronizing: the theorist, the philosopher, is a self-sufficient storyteller; the products of the novelist, while they may prove to be occasionally useful (presumably for strictly exemplary purposes), "certainly" cannot be granted philosophical seriousness. Throughout Beiner's work, and work of this kind, philosophy is virtually equated with *theoria*, or detached reflection—an ancient equation, to which Beiner but adds the idea that *theoria* is a kind of narrative.

This is almost Platonic, but not quite. Though Plato was at great pains to insist upon the superiority of philosophy (by which he means dialectical inquiry only) to literature as a means of discovering truth, he would never have claimed that philosophy was any sort of storytelling, even a superior sort. Storytelling for Plato is what you do when you have heard about something; you repeat a story that you have heard from someone who (in his or her turn) was repeating it without knowing the truth of the matter. What the teller or hearer of such a story possesses is something quite different from truth, which one discovers only through the agonistic rigors of the dialectical encounter. What Beiner wants is to have it both ways: to claim the superiority of philo-

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sophical *theoria* to literature while simultaneously claiming that such *theoria* is the best sort of storytelling. This leaves to literature no indispensable role in the quest for truth about what Beiner calls "the grand questions of human nature and human destiny." It *may* be used, if one desires, to illustrate that which has been learned, and can (in principle, at least) be taught, on other grounds—theoretical, philosophical grounds.

It is hard to overstress the dominance of this view of the relationship between literature, stories, or art more generally, and (philosophical) knowledge. Indeed, a position analogous to Beiner's has shaped—to take an example close to the heart of my own interests—understandings of the narrative portions of Scripture almost since the beginnings of the Church. Consider, for instance, how many preachers and theologians understand Jesus' parables (against the textual evidence, by the way) as a series of "concrete examples" meant to illustrate "general spiritual principles."

But what if, despite the ubiquity of this view, it is wrong? What if some fictional (or nonfictional) narratives are able to discover truths about "human nature and human destiny" that are inaccessible to theoretical reflection? I would like to suggest that, if this high view of narrative's ability to generate (not merely illustrate) knowledge is ever right, it will be within the realm of "everyday ethics." For the everyday is precisely what is most inaccessible to "general principles." This is why the reductive quasi-narrative examples used in ethics classes for the last thirty years—which have us throwing people off lifeboats or stealing drugs for our dying children—rarely touch on the genuinely everyday. The popularity of the television series *Survivor* can be accounted for on like grounds: it presents a decontextualized, drastically simplified ethical cosmos in which people make decisions that bear little resemblance to the ones that we regularly face. Indeed, *Survivor* is little more than a dramatization of bad ethics textbooks. The assumption behind such impoverished "stories" is that only when the complexities and contingencies of everyday life are stripped away can we get at the underlying "principles" of ethics. And this may well be true. But what use are ethical principles that vanish from our sight once complexity and contingency enter the picture?

If we look at this issue from the literary perspective, it is readily seen that "everyday ethics" is the province of the novel. Not the everyday per se, mind you, for much modern poetry is deeply in love with the quotidian—"bearing witness / To what each morning brings again to light," as Richard Wilbur says in his great poem "Lying." But poetry illuminates the beauty of the ordinary *moment*, giving it full attention and even adoration:

Gold crosses, cornices, astonishment
Of panes, the turbine-vent which natural law
Spins on the grill-end of the diner's roof,
Then grass and grackles or, at the end of town
In sheen-swept pasture land, the horse's neck
Clothed with its usual thunder, and the stones
Beginning now to tug their shadows in
And track the air with glitter.

How beautiful; how just. And the ethical significance of such attentiveness to the particularity of the created world should not be undervalued. Yet in the more common sense of the term "ethical"—involving one's choices and responsibilities to oneself, to others, and to God—the ethical dimension of everyday life finds its fullest exploration in fiction. Historians of ideas commonly give the Reformation considerable credit for both the rise of the novel and the attribution of dignity to the everyday—through, for instance, its emphasis on the priesthood of all believers and its belief that all Christians (not just those who have taken vows) have a divinely appointed vocation. But the point need not be argued here. Suffice it to say that there is undoubtedly a deep connection between the development of the novel and an unprecedented attention to the ordinary. When Balzac begins his great novel *Père Goriot* with an astonishingly detailed inventory of almost every shabby, tacky object in and around the house of Madame Vauquer—and then proceeds to use the language of epic heroism to describe the adventures and misadventures of a callow youth from the provinces trying to "succeed" in Paris—he is engaging in a project that Homer or Dante, or for that matter Shakespeare, would have found incomprehensible.

It may be that certain Christian beliefs about the dignity and value of each human life, however apparently insignificant, undergird and even produce the genre we call the novel; but by the time of Balzac those beliefs had, among the intelligentsia at least, become attenuated if not invisible, leaving the fictional genre floating there, in ethical mid-air as it were, unsupported by any particular set of convictions. I am strongly tempted to argue that the kind of philosophical liberalism that emerged in the eighteenth and especially the nineteenth century was a way of trying to articulate and justify the value placed on ordinary human life by novels. Indeed, this argument would scarcely overrate the importance of the novel in post-Enlightenment European society (though its importance in America was less). Great novels present the everyday bathed in a warm, even illumination like that of Vermeer's interiors (themselves a product of the same cultural moment).

Surely the compelling power of those books had to have some philosophical justification. As Iris Murdoch

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points out, the philosophy of John Stuart Mill (once he had his utilitarian upbringing tempered and corrected by literary experience, as he records in his *Autobiography*) amounts pretty much to this. As Murdoch also notes, Mill's philosophy is notably unsuccessful at justifying and defending the value of the ordinary individual life—considerably less successful than, say, the novels of Dickens, Balzac, and Tolstoy. It is likely that the average philosophical liberal owes his or her beliefs more to an encounter with George Eliot than one with John Rawls; indeed, it is difficult to imagine Rawls convincing, or even interesting, anyone whose mind has not already been shaped by nineteenth-century fiction. (Interestingly, I do not believe that there is a single literary example in the six hundred pages of the *Theory of Justice*—a rhetorical miscalculation, at the least, on Rawls' part.)

The question is, why are novels so much more effective than philosophical arguments at articulating and promoting a liberal view of human value? Could it be that the texture of everyday life is something that finds its full worth, and adequate description, only in narrative form? If so, it would follow that "the ethics of everyday life" *must* be a narrational ethics, grounded in and fully communicable only through stories. Some may protest at this, and protest by calling our attention back to those Christian principles out of which the novel originally emerged. But in the biblical faiths of Judaism and Christianity, it is narrative that always produces, rather than derives from, or exemplifies, principles. Indeed, everyday ethics may be said to begin when Moses descended from Sinai, with the Law's scrupulous attention to every aspect of ordinary people's ordinary lives; and Sinai is an event comprehensible only within the context of the narrative we call "the history of Israel."

But how does this account of the narrative embodiment of ethical meaning work? Let's get down to cases. In the largest and richest of the Everyday Ethics books, Leon and Amy Kass' *Wing to Wing, Oar to Oar: Readings on Courting and Marrying*, we find an excerpt from Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. At eleven pages, it is one of the longer ones in any of the volumes. It is placed within a section called "Why Marry? Defenses of Matrimony," and is given its own subtitle by the Kasses: "For Love or Money?" The episode that the Kasses provide involves Mr. Collins, the cloddish and sycophantic young clergyman who (according to the terms of a legal document called an "entail") will inherit the estate of his cousin Mr. Bennett, leaving the cash-poor Bennett's five daughters unprovided for. Mr. Collins proposes to Elizabeth, the oldest Bennett daughter and the heroine of the story. Were Elizabeth to accept him, at least some of her family's financial uncertainty would be relieved, and the estate would remain in the family. But to her father's great relief and the vast discomfiture of Mr. Collins and his enthusiastic supporter Mrs. Bennett, Elizabeth declines—only to discover, soon afterward, that Mr. Collins' amorous overtures have been accepted by her friend Charlotte Lucas.

The Kasses say that the chapters they excerpt "make clear what prompts a Mr. Collins and a Charlotte Lucas to marry, and indirectly and by contrast, what might lead an Elizabeth to marry." I am not sure that matters are so clear; the "Love or Money?" headline may be misleading here. There's no reason to think that Charlotte is marrying simply or even primarily for money: as she tells Elizabeth, though in the more reticent language of a young Regency lady, she's not getting any younger (Charlotte is twenty-seven, Elizabeth only twenty) and doesn't know how many more chances for matrimony she will have. Moreover, she speaks of the value of having "a comfortable home," even in the admittedly imperfect company of Mr. Collins, and though Elizabeth cannot imagine that this is a significant consideration, perhaps that's a failure of experience on Elizabeth's part. (Later in the novel, when Elizabeth visits the Collinses, she has to admit that "there [is] really a great air of comfort" about the house, and notes Charlotte's "evident enjoyment of it." Mr. Collins remains cloddish, but perhaps Charlotte's choice is not as completely indefensible as Elizabeth thinks. Austen remains silent on this point.)

Moreover, it's not clear that, were she to agree to marry Mr. Collins, Elizabeth would be acting from purely mercenary motives. Money might be involved, but so too would be the peace of mind and future security of her parents and sisters. What *Pride and Prejudice* seems to show is that money cannot always be so neatly disentangled from other values, and the value of money from the value of what one receives in exchange for it. (We live by various economies, almost all of which overlap.) Indeed, the great function of the novel in relation to everyday ethics is its ability to demonstrate the various forms of entanglement, the ways in which even small and apparently simple choices—still more the evidently momentous ones—can have unanticipated repercussions and unintended consequences.

All this is not to say that the Kasses were wrong to give the episode the title they do—though perhaps they *are* wrong—but rather to show that no category or nostrum can account for the nuanced and fully contextualized ethical world of great fiction, even when it is given to us in small chunks. Of course, neither the Kasses nor anyone else would contest this point: we all recognize, though we may also sympathize with, the mistake made by the young Richard Rodriguez, who

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tells this story in his wonderful autobiography *Hunger of Memory*:

> In the sixth grade I simply concluded that what gave a book its value was some major idea or theme it contained. If that core essence could be mined and memorized, I would become learned like my teachers. I decided to record in a notebook the themes of books that I read. After reading *Robinson Crusoe*, I wrote that its theme was "the value of learning to live by oneself." When I completed *Wuthering Heights*, I noted the danger of "letting emotions get out of control." Rereading these brief moralistic appraisals usually left me disheartened. I couldn't believe that they were really the source of reading's value. But for many more years, they constituted the only means I had of describing to myself the educational value of books.

We may smile wryly at this boy's labored attempts to find categories with which to organize his experiences as a reader; but of course the desire to categorize never goes away, even if our methods grow more complex. One of the problems with William Bennett's *Book of Virtues* (and its progeny, such as *The Children's Book of Virtues* and *The Moral Compass*) is that it tends to do for its readers what the young Rodriguez did for himself, that is, to provide an executive summary of a given tale or poem's "moral"—and in an editorial preface to the tale or poem. For instance, "Good people stick to good manners, as this story from a turn-of-the-century reader reminds us." "Aristotle would have loved this poem and the one that follows it. The first illustrates excess, the second deficiency. The trick to finding correct behavior is to strike the right balance." Such prevenient instruction actually impedes the act of reading by telling readers in advance what the stories will teach them. (The latter example is particularly lamentable, since it precedes one of Hilaire Belloc's hilarious "Cautionary Tales"—in this case, "Rebecca, Who Slammed Doors for Fun and Perished Miserably"—which manage simultaneously to moralize and make fun of moralizing.)

The attentive reader may already have noted that the Austen novel we were just discussing offers in its very title a neat set of categories, a binary scheme (pride/prejudice) by which we can organize our experiences as readers. Yet even as she employs such a scheme Austen implicitly notes its limits. Very early in the book we hear this discourse from Elizabeth's youngest sister Mary:

> "Pride," observed Mary, who piqued herself upon the solidity of her reflections, "is a very common failing I believe. . . . Vanity and pride are different things, though the words are often used synonymously. A person may be proud without being vain. Pride relates more to our opinion of ourselves, vanity to what we would have others think of us."

Mary is a comic character, more specifically the kind of comic character we call a *bore*. She bores people because she does not recognize that such abstract nostrums do not constitute conversation, or even significant reflection—just as the young Rodriguez did not realize the inadequacy of the "morals" that he appended to the books he read, and so bored himself. Austen, in her typically sly way, here warns us against an unimaginative use of the very scheme she offers in her title—and indeed, confusion ultimately comes to the reader who notes the early identification of Mr. Darcy as a "proud man" and assumes that Elizabeth must therefore represent "prejudice." In this book, matters don't fall out that neatly: but if hard cases make bad law, they make good novels.

We see, then, the difficulty of finding schemes or categories adequate to the ethical world of well-written fiction. (Badly written fiction is another matter.) If the schemes were adequate, then the fiction would be unnecessary. Yet no one thinks that such schemes are adequate. The question that we then face is whether philosophical arguments about the quality and features of the life well lived are significantly more adequate—sufficiently adequate, as Hume and Beiner suggest, to make the use of literature in elucidating the moral life unnecessary, if occasionally useful. Thinking back to the moral choices faced by Charlotte Lucas and Elizabeth Bennett, we might see dialectical argument as having this in common with schematic categorization: it can, in a highly generalized way, take such overlapping and often competing obligations into consideration, but has no hope of teasing out the practical interaction of those obligations. The moral philosopher who sought to produce "examples" with the richness and depth necessary to an adequate account of the moral life would find himself or herself writing novels—which is indeed what happened to Iris Murdoch, who, though a professional philosopher, wrote only a handful of philosophical treatises, but twenty-five substantial works of fiction that collectively provide a compelling picture of the moral world of late-twentieth-century British intellectuals.

If my argument here is right, then the ideal means to illuminate "everyday ethics" might be in books just like these: compilations, anthologies, gatherings of poems and stories. Poems provide photographs, as it were, of the moral life: frozen moments of dilemma or insight. Thus Richard John Neuhaus' employment of

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Dylan Thomas' impassioned "Refusal to Mourn the Death, by Fire, of a Child in London," or Gilbert Meilaender's choice of George Herbert's précis of the Lutheran theology of vocation, "The Elixir":

Teach me, my God and King,
In all things thee to see,
And what I do in anything
To do it as for thee; . . .

This is the famous stone
That turneth all to gold:
For that which God doth touch and own
Cannot for less be told.

Because lyric poems possess this capacity to focus, freeze, and intensify, they tend to be brief, and therefore can be given in these anthologies in full; but the narrative forms are different, and I believe there is only one complete story in any of the volumes, Flannery O'Connor's "A Good Man Is Hard to Find" (in *The Eternal Pity*). This is not a bad thing, as long as it is clear that excerpts are excerpts. If poems are ethical photographs, excerpts from stories are more like cylindrical plugs of rock removed for study by a geologist: the plugs register certain structural features of a formation, lay bare some of its strata, and reveal some of the forces that created it, but cannot capture the whole massive form. If the plugs stimulate interest in the larger geological productions, if the excerpts stimulate interest in the comprehensive story of which they are a part, they will have served their proper purpose.

This is not to say that fiction contains no set-pieces that to some degree stand alone. In *Working*, Meilaender includes the famous mowing episode from *Anna Karenina*, which unforgettably portrays the experience of being lost in one's work, absorbed (in this case) in the physicality of the task:

> The longer Levin went on mowing, the oftener he experienced those moments of oblivion when his arms no longer seemed to swing the scythe, but the scythe itself his whole body, so conscious and full of life; and as if by magic, regularly and definitely without a thought being given to it, the work accomplished itself of its own accord. These were blessed moments.

But of course the beauty and meaning of this passage are intensified when we realize that this "blessed" relief from the burdens of self-consciousness is something only very occasionally granted to Levin, and near the end of the book wholly withdrawn from him. That is, the set-piece is wonderful in itself, still more wonderful in the narrative context from which it stands out as a miraculous and longed-for moment.

Some set-pieces, of course, are too much of a good thing; Dickens was famous, or notorious, for those. One thinks particularly of the death of Little Nell, from *The Old Curiosity Shop*, a scene from which Dickens would later extract tears by the bucketful in his public readings. (As Oscar Wilde said, "One must have a heart of stone to read the death of Little Nell without laughing.") Father Neuhaus spares us Nell, preferring instead little Paul Dombey, whose end is less mawkish—though not as compelling, in my judgment, as the story of Jo, the illiterate crossing-sweeper in *Bleak House*. But with regard to our last earthly act the set-piece of all set-pieces is surely the death of Tolstoy's Ivan Illych, which Neuhaus rightly includes. (It may seem too obvious a choice, but like great tunes, great stories are famous for a reason.) Even so, Ivan's tormented demise makes more sense and has more power in the context of the life that precedes it: Tolstoy's genius is nowhere more evident than in his decision to begin the story with Ivan Illych already in the coffin and then to circle back to describe a life that was "most simple and most ordinary and therefore most terrible."

In some cases, though, the extracts are more powerful standing alone than in context. Neuhaus offers the gut-wrenching climax to Peter DeVries' novel *The Blood of the Lamb*, which struck me more forcefully in the anthology than it did when I read the novel itself, which is a flawed one. Likewise, by excerpting from *Hard Times* Dickens' description of Mr. Gradgrind's teaching methods, Mark Schwehn allows us to focus our attention on the questions of what teaching is, should be, and should not be. Ultimately, I expect, we will want to look at the whole novel and see how Dickens' critique of Gradgrind's teaching fits within his larger critique of the mechanization and rationalization of a culture under the sway of Benthamite utilitarianism; but there are good reasons for extracting the "plug" from this larger complex of ideas and considering it on its own terms.

In the end this is what a good anthology—and each of the anthologies under consideration here is a good one—does: provide extracts suitable for meditation. Or, to replace my geological metaphor with the gustatory one Paul Griffiths uses in his excellent book *Religious Reading*, provide "gobbets" that can be chewed to extract their flavor, gobbets that can ultimately be swallowed and digested as sources of nourishment. That metaphor is a venerable one: in medieval monastic practice the word of God was to be tasted with the *palatum cordis* (the "palate of the heart") and then chewed, *ruminated* upon (*ruminatio* means chewing), before being digested. If stories and poems are to play a role in the development of ethical consciousness and living, they must be treated in

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like manner. The Ethics of Everyday Life series offers us an opportunity to read in just this way; though no book can compel profitable reading.

Developing his account of the role that anthologies play in "religious reading," Griffiths draws an interesting contrast between two "ideal types" of anthology. The first type tends to contain large "gobbets" (perhaps even complete works), rarely if ever indicates their source, offers paraphrases as well as exact quotations, and provides few if any instructions for how to categorize its contents. The second type is "an anthology the sources of whose excerpts are carefully and precisely indicated, together with information on how to find them; whose gobbets are of widely varying length; whose method of quotation is only and exactly verbatim; whose method of organization appears designed for repeated use and reference rather than for memorial storage (perhaps it contains indices, subject headings, and the like)."

In Griffiths' view, the former type of anthology is more characteristic of "religious reading," whereas the latter "is likely to be an object for consumerist reading, plundered for particular purposes, kept on the shelf for repeated use. Its blooms [this is another traditional metaphor employed by Griffiths] are not likely to be used in the formation and nutrition of a religious account." That first kind of anthology, so rare today, is a more personal document, closer to a commonplace book, and hence—so Griffiths argues—more amenable to playing a significant and sustaining role in a religious account of life and in religious practice.

Does this distinction work? Only in part: anthologies like the Ethics of Everyday Life volumes may not create or even offer major sustenance to a religious view of life or to religious practice, but they are something more personal and substantive than the anonymous and methodical kind of anthology that Griffiths refers to as nonreligious. It's worth noting that, as the preface common to all five books notes, these anthologies grow out of dialogues among friends, friends from different religious traditions (Jewish, Catholic Christian, Protestant Christian) who nevertheless share a belief in the necessity of religious tradition, the interest of their own traditions in the ethical contours of ordinary lives, and the importance of finding various ways, direct and indirect, to cultivate the ethical gardens of those traditions. Such cultivation includes, one would think, the making of anthologies.

It's also worth noting that the editors trust their traditions sufficiently to provide less direct interpretive direction than William Bennett does in his collections; indeed, the volumes do not embody a single approach to the task of organizing and commenting on the anthologized materials. Some introduce each gobbet individually, some introduce whole sections; some have simple organizational schemes, some more complex. But literature provides these editors with insights and stories that help make sense of religious traditions—but which themselves make sense, or complete sense, only by being included in an overarching religious tradition. If poems and stories do not precisely constitute those traditions, they seem to be necessary to its full expression, to have a value that is more than merely heuristic or instrumental. When asked how we should work, or love, or teach, or die, we naturally respond with stories; one might go so far as to say that questions beginning with "How" demand answers in narrative or poetic form. And that—minimally, though certainly not exclusively—that's the point of Art. FT

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Books In Review

An Almost Christian Fantasy

The Golden Compass. By Philip Pullman. *Knopf. 326 pp. $26 cloth. Ballantine/Del Ray. 351 pp. $6.99 paper.*

The Subtle Knife. By Philip Pullman. *Knopf. 326 pp. $26 cloth. Ballantine/Del Ray. 288 pp. $6.99 paper.*

The Amber Spyglass. By Philip Pullman. *Knopf. 518 pp. $19.95.*

***Reviewed by* Daniel P. Moloney**

The bestselling novels of J. K. Rowling have tempted many reviewers to divide publishing history in two—The Potter Era and Before the Potter Era—so often are the tales of our favorite Gryffendorf held up as the standard for all children's literature. There are some who dissent from this view, not simply out of spite, but because they think this is the era of an even greater author who writes for children. The Harry Potter novels are fun, which is why every reviewer seems to use the same I-read-it-before-my-kids-could-get-to-it-ha-ha gambit. But few serious critics praise Rowling with the superlatives—"sophisticated," "ambitious," "complex," "realistic"—regularly applied to the novels of Philip Pullman, especially his fantasy epic series His Dark Materials, whose third book, *The Amber Spyglass*, just won the prestigious British Book Award for the Children's Book of the Year (the first book won in 1996), and is currently just behind Rowling on the *New York Times* children's bestseller list.

Daniel P. Moloney *is Associate Editor of* First Things.

Now I love the Harry Potter books. But there is no passage in Rowling's series that compares with this delightful description of Lyra Belacqua, the child heroine of Pullman's novels:

> In many ways Lyra was a barbarian. What she liked the best was clambering over the College roofs with Roger, the kitchen boy who was her particular friend, to spit plum stones on the heads of passing Scholars or to hoot like owls outside a window where a tutorial was going on, or racing through the narrow streets, or stealing apples from the market, or waging war. Just as she was unaware of the hidden currents of politics running below the surface of College affairs, so the Scholars, for their part, would have been unable to see the rich seething stew of alliances and enmities and feuds and treaties which was a child's life in Oxford. Children playing together: how pleasant to see! What could be more innocent and charming?

Few authors have captured the terrific energy of children of a certain age as well.

Although he writes for children, Pullman refuses to be pigeonholed as a children's author, arguing that "When you say 'this book is for children' what you are really saying is 'This book is not for grown-ups.'" He also doesn't think of himself as a fantasy author, insisting that His Dark Materials is "stark realism," because the fantastic elements of the story are there just to support and embody a vision of what man really is, psychologically, metaphysically, and spiritually. "Why shouldn't a work of fantasy be as truthful and profound about becoming an adult human being as the work of George Eliot or Jane Austen?" he asks, and rightly so. Pullman thinks Milton's *Paradise Lost* is just such a mature fantasy, and His Dark Materials is supposed to be a modern retelling of the Garden of Eden story after a very Miltonian fashion.

Pullman conceived of the series after writing down its first words, "Lyra and her daemon." The idea of daemons (pronounced "demons") has antecedents in the *daimon* or spirit that Socrates claimed as an aid in his judgment, and in the tradition of guardian angels. A daemon is a part of the human soul that takes the visible form of an animal, or many animals—the daemons of children change shape constantly, but settle down at puberty into just one shape as a person's character becomes more definite. So the helmsman of a boat might have a seagull as his daemon, while Pantalaimon, Lyra Belacqua's daemon, begins the series as a moth but shifts into a mouse, a dragon, an ermine, a mountain lion, a cat, and just about any animal shape you can think of. It is extraordinarily painful for daemons to go far from their people (it feels like your heart is being torn from your breast), and when Lyra sees at one stage a boy without a daemon, she is revolted:

> The little boy was huddled against the wood drying rack where hung row upon row of gutted fish, all stiff as boards. He was clutching a piece of fish to him as Lyra was clutching Pantalaimon, with her left hand, hard, against her heart; but that was all he had, a piece of dried fish; because he had no daemon at all. The Gobblers had cut it away. That was *intercision*, and this was a severed child. Her first impulse was to turn and run, or to be sick.

This device of the daemon, which is one of the great inventions of fantastic fiction, frames Pullman's whole trilogy. The reader comes to love dae-

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mons, especially Lyra's Pantalaimon, and one can easily imagine thousands of children (and not a few adults) wishing they had one.

The Golden Compass really begins when street urchins and servants' children begin disappearing all over Europe (in the parallel world in which the action takes place). Word spreads on the streets that the Gobblers have stolen them, and are performing terrible experiments on them way up in the Arctic Circle. A mysterious substance called Dust seems to be involved, but the Church has forbidden any discussion of Dust, for it falls in the realm of philosophical speculation rather than theological research, and because it may have something to do with Original Sin. When Lyra's best friend Roger and another boy are taken by the Gobblers, Lyra becomes determined to rescue them, and her adventures begin. There is a prophecy about Lyra that she will determine the fate of the universe, although she must do so without knowing what she is doing.

In *The Subtle Knife*, book two of the series, we meet Will Parry, a boy from Oxford in our world, who also is destined to play a major role in the history of the cosmos—he finds and bears a knife called God-killer that can cut a passage between worlds. He and Lyra meet in Cittigàzze, an Italianate city in yet a third world. Will is looking for his father, an explorer who Will thinks has travelled into a different world, and Lyra's alethiometer (a truth-telling device, the golden compass of the first book) tells her she should help him. Lyra wants also to help her father, the mysterious Lord Asriel, who is preparing to overthrow the Authority ("God, the Creator, the Lord, Yahweh, El, Adonai, the King, the Father, the Almighty—those were all names he gave himself," an angel tells Will). He can do this, he thinks, because what the Church calls God is really only the name for the first angel, who tried to trick all the other creatures into submitting to him. Some of the angels rebelled centuries ago, but lost, and now Lord Asriel is rallying the remnant of those who favor truth over the Authority's lies to overthrow the Kingdom of Heaven and replace it with the Republic of Heaven.

The Amber Spyglass adds to the mix a fourth world, where the mulafeh, elephant-like people who roll around on wheels made from the giant seeds of giant trees, are starting to die off from the raids of giant swans and because the giant trees are dying as Dust leaves the world. So by the end of the series, Lyra and Will have to overthrow the Authority, rescue the dead (did I mention they make a trip to the realm of the dead à la Dante?), save the mulefah, heal the breach between the worlds, prevent the Gobblers from intercising children's daemons, and establish the Republic of Heaven, all the while remaining in a state of innocence so that they can either relive or renounce Eve's choice in the Garden of Eden.

Pullman has set himself an ambitious task, trying to tell a complex yet realistic tale about the death of God and the true nature and destiny of man. He has the talent to have pulled it off, but unfortunately, his atheism gets in the way. For unlike John Milton and his other hero William Blake, Pullman is a Richard Dawkins-type materialist, and his atheism fatally flaws *The Amber Spyglass*, and therefore, retroactively, the whole series. Pullman, who raised more than a few eyebrows with an article in the *Guardian* excoriating C. S. Lewis' Narnia stories for their tendency to lapse into preaching, falls prey to that same bad habit himself. Indeed, to facilitate his preaching, he breaks many of the rules of fantasy-writing in this third volume, and although this probably makes his novel more appropriate for children, it seriously weakens it as art.

Atheists can write perfectly good and realistic fiction, because there is nothing about being an atheist that prohibits a person from understanding human motivation and the physical world. But being nonreligious does deprive you of the one thing an ambitious fantasy author needs: a plausible cosmology, a myth that tells

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us how things got to be the way they are. The great religions all provide this. One could even hold, as did Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien, that a religion is just a story of the world, which in the case of Christianity (they held) happens to be true. A Christian fantasist in his act of subcreation can borrow heavily from the true mythic world created by the Christian God; the fantasist might change some of the names and other details, but the basic infinitely rich story has already been told.

The nonreligious fantasy author is forced to play the mythmaker twice, as it were. He has to develop a cosmology of the way the world really is, the nonreligious account that replaces the account given by the religions he rejects. And he has to write the fantasy story, obeying all the rules of the larger account and then creating his own world within it. In the first two books of the trilogy, Pullman merely alluded to the larger account while telling an imaginative and exciting adventure, which promised to be one of the best ever. In the third book, however, he needed to explain his theory of innocence and adulthood, which he thought required him to tell a different story of the Fall, which in turn tempted him to explain how everything we think and feel can be explained simply by scientific materialism.

As one might expect, it is hard to accomplish all this and still tell a good tale, and despite the extra work he put into writing it (Pullman took two years longer than he originally promised to finish the third volume), and despite his attempts to make the book consistent with cutting-edge research in physics (he alludes to aspects of quantum nonlocality and multi-dimensional string theory), *The Amber Spyglass* is not a success. There are moments of brilliant writing, but Pullman's imagination is not up to his ambitions, so that what should be the breathlessly anticipated climax is instead rather dull.

It is clear through Pullman's many hints that the destiny of all the universe is tied up with the budding love between Will and Lyra. After the long buildup, and with all the turmoil caused by the Armageddon-like battle, one expects the series to end with a Garden of Eden moment, where Lyra and Will have to make some important choice that determines how things will be from now on. I was waiting with no little trepidation to see what sort of fascinating gnostic myth Pullman would offer in place of the Christian one. If Pullman were to accomplish his transvaluation of all

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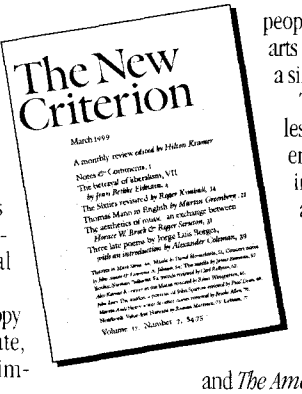

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values, where good is evil and evil good, and God and Christian morality and all that organized religion stands for are to be shown for the lies that they are, this is the scene where it ought to take place.

Yet no such alternative theory is on offer. In Pullman's telling, the fate of all creation hinges, not on some difficult choice between good and evil, but merely on the moment when Will and Lyra first kiss. Somehow (and in the 1,100 pages of the trilogy there is *nothing* that suggests why this is of literally cosmic significance), after this kiss—and that's as far as they go—the Dust that had been flowing out of the universe flows back in, and an age of peace and love is suddenly possible. Because these two young teenagers are basically innocent, as the shifting of their daemons reveals, their innocent love is supposed to show that sex and things of the flesh are very good, when properly ordered. Pullman mistakenly attacks Christian asceticism when he really is rejecting only heretical Manicheism.

Religious people should find nothing objectionable in the moral message (though Pullman seems to think they will), but the failure of imagination here is unforgivable. Kissing may be great and all, but only a lovesick teenager can believe that *everything* is different after the first kiss. As we saw above, Pullman captures the complexities of childhood too well for us to accept that it is simply sexual innocence, and adulthood sexual experience. What is supposed to be the moment of high drama for the trilogy disappointingly provides only maudlin banalities.

Fortunately, there's a little bit more to the story. Soon after The Kiss, Will and Lyra are forced to make a very painful choice between their own happiness and keeping their promises to others—and they choose loyalty and the common good. The possibility of great happiness is presented to them, and they give it up at great cost to themselves. This melancholy ending redeems the earlier banality, both morally and narratively—but only by appealing to the very Christian notion that we should put aside even good things like kissing in the name of the last things. The choice that Lyra and Will make is analogous to the choice a young man or woman considering religious celibacy makes: though I can reject my destiny, and it will require great strength to carry out, I am clearly called to forgo the great good of marriage in order that others may enjoy life and go to heaven.

IT IS NOT surprising that as acute an observer as Pullman inadvertantly develops such a powerfully Christian scene. I'll let a passage from *The Amber Spyglass* explain why. In the land of the dead, harpies have been appointed by the Authority to shout to all the souls of the dead and call to mind all their anxieties and misdeeds. Over time the ghosts lose their memories of being alive, in part, it seems, as a defense against the harpies' painful reminders. When Lyra and her party arrive in the underworld, the harpies attack them with great delight—being still alive, their painful memories and doubts are still fresh and strong. Lyra tries to bargain with No-Name, the chief harpy.

> "What do you want with us?" said Lyra.
> "What can you give me?"
> "We could tell you where we've been, and maybe you'd be interested, I don't know. We saw all kinds of strange things on the way here."
> "Oh, and you're offering to tell me a story?"
> "If you'd like."
> "Maybe I would. . . . Try then," said No-Name.

Lyra, who is a terrific storyteller and whose quick-thinking and skillful lies get her out of trouble throughout the

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series, begins to spin one of her best tales, when "Without a cry of warning, the harpy launched herself at Lyra, claws outstretched. . . . 'Liar! Liar!' the harpy was screaming. 'Liar!'" Later, though, when Lyra recounts to the dead spirit of a little girl true stories of her childhood and travels to help the girl remember what the world of the living is like, Lyra looks up to see the harpies listening in, "solemn and spellbound." Why?

> "Because it was true," said No-Name. "Because she spoke the truth. Because it was nourishing. Because it was feeding us. Because we couldn't help it. Because it was true. Because we had no idea there was anything but wickedness. Because it brought us news of the world and the sun and the wind and the rain. Because it was true."

Though it is heavy-handed, I found this a powerful image, the putrid harpies enthralled by simple truths well told. Even the monsters in Pullman's world are attracted by innocence and truth. Even they are not beyond redemption, are in need of true stories. This passage reveals Pullman's philosophy of literature to be identical with the "true myth" philosophy of Lewis and Tolkien. And if the Christian myth actually is true, you would expect a gifted storyteller trying to tell a true story to arrive at many Christian conclusions about the nature of the world we see.

The Christian myth has such a powerful hold over our narrative imagination that it is probably impossible to write a believable epic, especially one about the Last Things, without relying on it extensively. Pullman challenges the most fantastic and yet most persuasive parts of the Christian myth—Creation, the Fall, Sin, Death, Heaven, Hell—and one credits him for gumption. If his alternative were more compelling, I would recommend parents keep their children away. (Pullman has just signed to do a "reference work" called *The Book of Dust* which will lay out the creation myth in full, and thus probably won't be appropriate—or interesting—for children.)

As is, I can fairly characterize His Dark Materials in this fashion: imagine if at the beginning of the world Satan's rebellion had been successful, that he had reigned for two thousand years, and that a messiah was necessary to conquer lust and the spirit of domination with innocence, humility, and generous love at great personal cost. Such a story is not subversive of Christianity, it is almost Christian, even if only implicitly and imperfectly. But implicit and imperfect Christianity is often our lot in life, and Pullman has unintentionally created a marvelous depiction of many of the human ideals Christians hold dear.

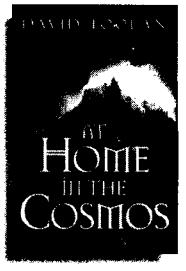
An Updated Classic

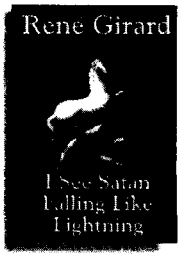
Augustine of Hippo: A Biography. A New Edition with an Epilogue. By Peter Brown. *University of California Press. 576 pp. $19.95.*

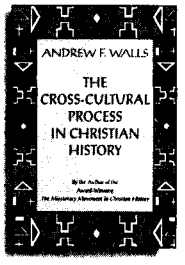
***Reviewed by* Robert Louis Wilken**

My worn and heavily marked copy of the original hardback edition of Peter Brown's biography of St. Augustine, its binding held together by sturdy book tape, sits on a bookshelf close to my desk as it has since it first appeared in 1967. On the inside cover I have a little note, "Reviewed in *Christian Century* 1968," and at the rear a list of words and phrases with page numbers that caught my attention when I first read it. Now there

Robert Louis Wilken *is the William R. Kenan, Jr. Professor of the History of Christianity at the University of Virginia.*







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sits beside it a shiny new edition, this one a classy paperback with a reproduction of the Vision of St. Augustine by Vittorio Carpaccio (1460-1523) on its cover. The man who wrote the original work was a promising young scholar in his early thirties at All Soul's College at Oxford; the person who issues the new edition is Rollins Professor of History at Princeton, the most renowned student of Augustine in the world, and one of the most respected historians of the religious history of the later Roman Empire.

The text of the biography remains the same, but Brown has added two lengthy epilogues, the first entitled "New Evidences," the second "New Directions." Like the book itself they are wise, engaging, and perceptive, written in the sparkling and graceful prose that Brown seems to produce so effortlessly.

SEVERAL YEARS before he died in 430, Augustine began to read through all his writings and wrote what we know today as the *Retractiones*, a title that might be translated as "reconsiderations." In this work he commented one by one on all his writings, giving details about the date and circumstances of the work, noting places where he had changed his mind, pointing out passages where he got things wrong, for example where he had cited a biblical text from memory and not gotten it correct. He was in his early seventies (he was born in 354), a famous bishop of the Church, a man whose opinion was sought from all over the Christian world, and he wanted to make certain that future generations had a reliable list of his works. He also wanted to be the first interpreter of his writings.

Augustine intended to do the same for his letters and sermons, but in 428 eight books of Julian Eclanum, Augustine's most vigorous theological opponent in his later years, arrived in Hippo and Augustine realized they had to be answered. So he put aside the task of reading his letters and turned again with weariness and resignation to the task thrust upon him. He died before he could return to the letters. As a consequence we do not have a certain list of his letters and sermons. It had, however, been assumed by scholars that the standard editions included all the sermons and letters that were preserved.

In 1969 the Austrian Academy of Sciences began to catalogue the Augustine manuscripts in the libraries of Europe (some fifteen thousand in all) and in 1969

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Johannes Divjak, a scholar from Vienna, came to France to work on the project. In the Bibliothèque Municipale of Marseilles, to the astonishment of Augustine scholars, he discovered a manuscript of Augustine's letters that included twenty-nine letters that were wholly unknown. The manuscript in which they were found is relatively late, fifteenth century, but Augustine scholars are certain they are genuine. Many come from late in Augustine's life and shed light on events in North Africa in which he was intimately involved. The letters are now available in an English translation by Robert Eno in the series Fathers of the Church published by Catholic University of America Press in 1989.

But there is more. In 1990, Francois Dolbeau, a French scholar, discovered that a manuscript in the Stadtsbibliothek of Mainz contained a group of twenty-six sermons, some quite lengthy, most unknown, and some giving the full text of sermons that were known only from excerpts made in the Middle Ages. In contrast to the letters that come from the end of Augustine's life, some of these sermons were preached in A.D. 397 in Carthage shortly after Augustine was consecrated Bishop of Hippo, others a few years later when Augustine was contending with the Donatists.

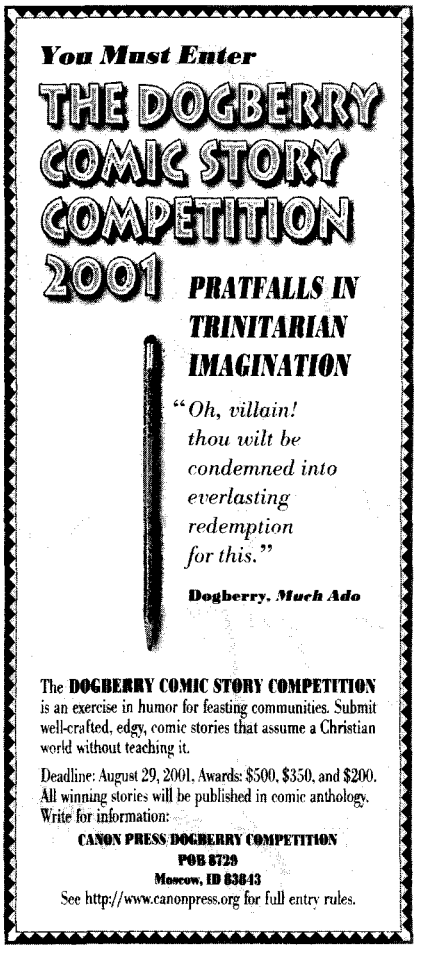
What makes the letters and sermons so interesting to us, observes Brown, is "their unremitting circumstantiality," which is one reason why they were excerpted by the medievals and not copied in their entirety, or were simply ignored. When later scholars read Augustine they sought writings that dealt with theological topics or the spiritual life, singling out passages that were particularly applicable to their own lives and times. For the historian today, however, these sermons allow us to hear "the living voice of Augustine the bishop, caught, in turns, at its most intimate and at its most routine." The new sermons are available in a lively translation by Edmund Hill, O.P., in the New City translation of Augustine's writings, *The Works of Saint Augustine* III/11, published in 1997.

THE LETTERS and sermons have prompted Brown to look again at his youthful book and to rethink his portrait of Augustine, at least at certain points. He now finds the older Augustine to be more attractive, less stern and authoritarian, than he did thirty years ago. No doubt this is in part because Brown is now older, but the examples he brings in the first epilogue are illuminating. Augustine's sermons now appear more as "dialogues with the crowd" than authoritative utterances from the bishop's *cathedra*, and his tone often reveals that he had little authority over his hearers. On one occasion in Carthage the congregation shouted him down and forced him to stop preaching on the festival of a major saint.

On another, recounted in a letter written in 420, we learn that when Atticus, the Patriarch of Constantinople, wrote to Aurelius, Bishop of Carthage, he did not address a similar letter to Augustine. It may be that he thought Augustine had died, but it is more likely that as head of the premier Christian city in the East it was beneath his dignity to send greetings to the bishop of a small African town. Theological learning did not count for much in the world of ecclesiastical diplomacy. Augustine sent Atticus a witty response, the kind of comment, says Brown, "that makes one forgive so much in the old man." Augustine wrote: "For what is easier to believe than that a man, born to die, should, in fact, have died."

The second epilogue is no less interesting. It is concerned with the extraordinary energy and vitality of scholarship on the later Roman Empire over the last generation and its significance for understanding the world Augustine inhabited. By contrast to what we previously knew of the Church in Roman Africa, today we are able to envision "an immensely wider landscape," writes Brown. "We can take in all of Christian Africa, and not only those parts of it revealed to us by Augustine's participation in the Donatist controversy. It is a landscape against which the figure of Augustine is all but dwarfed. His clear, insistent voice did not always carry throughout that wide land."

Just as there were letters and sermons that were not known until a few years ago, archaeological excavations have uncovered towns and churches that were wholly unknown to us until recently. A huge church dedicated at the shrine of St. Crispina, for example, was discovered at Theveste (Tebessa in Alge-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ria), having been erected by a fellow Catholic bishop with an eye for superb craftsmanship. Nothing is said of the bishop or the church in Augustine's writings. Inscriptions and piles of wine amphorae give us a vivid picture of feasting at tombs of the dead, a practice Augustine tried in vain to discourage. We know a great deal more about the social world of the later Roman empire; through prosopographical studies we are able to identify particular persons with much greater exactitude; and we have a keener sense of the continuing attraction of paganism, a fact that helps us understand why Augustine's great work *The City of God* was an "apology" in defense of Christianity and not a work of political theology.

AS FOR AUGUSTINE'S intellectual life, Brown sees more unity in Augustine's thinking than he did earlier. His thought is "less riven by fateful discontinuities than I had thought." Brown is impressed at Augustine's patience and unusual capacity to take enormous effort to address issues that might trouble the faithful. Again and again, in what Brown calls "quiet acts of self-sacrifice," he took up his pen in defense of the Church. And Brown reminds modern interpreters, particularly on the matter of sexuality, that Augustine was the defender of marriage against the extreme asceticism of his contemporaries. "We must never read Augustine as if he were contemporary with ourselves." He was the contemporary of Jerome and Gregory of Nyssa and Ambrose, and Christian tradition would have taken a quite different direction, I am sure, if Augustine did not stand between us and them. His is a voice of moderation. As Brown notes, "He wished for a greater recognition of the physical, sexual components of human nature, and was prepared to defend their legitimate expression (if in a disciplined manner) in marriage."

There is much more packed into these two epilogues (as well as extensive bibliographical notes of recent books and articles), but these few examples give a sampling of the pleasures to be found in this new edition of *Augustine of Hippo*. Even if one has the original, the new edition is a must. After reading the epilogues one is drawn back to the text itself, and I have found it inviting to be greeted by a clean page (without my old markings) as I read it now, a different person than I was thirty years ago.

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Psychoanalysis with a Difference

The Ways of the Will. Expanded Edition. By Leslie H. Farber. Edited by Robert Boyers and Anne Farber. *Basic. 256 pp. $18.*

***Reviewed by* Barbara J. Moore**

The publication of an expanded and revised version of Leslie Farber's *The Ways of the Will* nearly twenty years after his death and almost a quarter century since the appearance of his last book is an occasion of both interest and pleasure. After a long eclipse, his name and work recently came again to public attention through two prominent sources. One was the publication last year of Emily Fox Gordon's memoir, *Mockingbird Years*, a work that details her psychotherapy with Farber. The second was a Summer 1999 special issue of the journal *Salmagundi* devoted to a rediscovery of Farber's work and to critical assessments and memoirs by several renowned psychoanalysts, including Adam Phillips, Stephen Mitchell, and Robert Jay Lifton. So it is fitting that a new collation of previously collected and uncollected essays should now appear.

In these essays, Farber seeks the underlying coherence in a wide range of experiences by making good use of a single concept, namely will. In its appropriate use, he tells us, will is joined to other faculties, like intelligence, judgment, and imagination. Its presence is neither insistent nor forced, but quietly carries us in a particular direction, helping to determine the course our life takes. In its inappropriate use, will separates itself from these other faculties, becoming bloated and overbearing, as it attempts to subject all aspects of experience to itself. Farber concedes that certain goals are more or less amenable to the relatively isolated action of will, while insisting that others become irrevocably distorted when subject to its influence: "I can will knowledge, but not wisdom; going to bed, but not sleeping; eating, but not hunger; meekness, but not humility; scrupulosity, but not virtue; self-assertion or bravado, but not courage; lust, but not love; commiseration, but not sympathy; congratulations, but not admiration; religiosity, but not faith; reading, but not understanding."

Barbara J. Moore *is a psychologist in private practice in New York City and a member of the faculty of Queens College, City University of New York.*

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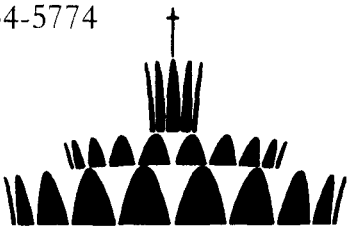

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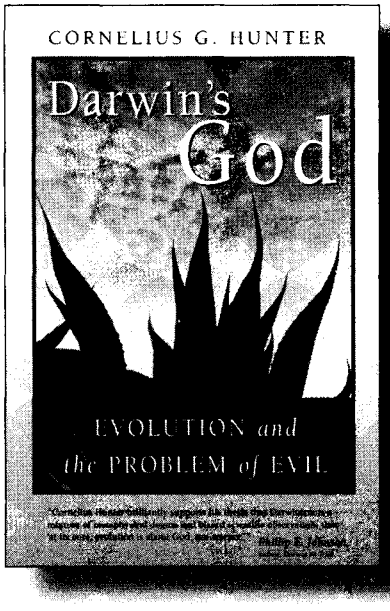
As we read this list, we notice how the second term of each pair, the one not amenable to will, is, because it is more desirable, the more tempting to will. It is precisely in this temptation to will what can't be willed that Farber locates our most poignant distress. It is, of course, fair to ask how, if not through will, these most desirable qualities of being arise. Beyond that, we might wonder what about these qualities makes them out of reach, at least when willfully sought.

Farber locates the answer to these questions in what he calls the first realm of will, in which we are moving, unconsciously, "in a particular direction, rather than toward a particular goal." He means by unconscious neither repressed contents nor their automatic enactment in symbolic form. Rather, he is pointing to those moments when we are mercifully free of *self*-consciousness, when our senses, and beyond our senses, our very being, are alert to the situation itself, ready to meet it, not to force it. The possibility of courage, for example, arises when dangerous or difficult circumstances so deeply stake their claim on us that we respond almost despite ourselves. Afterwards, others may infer that we have been courageous, but to seek courage directly is a form of vanity rather than the unselfish surrender required. It is an irony richly savored by Farber that we are most free precisely at such moments of surrender, when the clamors and claims of self-will are subordinate to the situation itself.

ALTHOUGH THERE IS a strain of idealism in Farber's writing, an attitude almost of reverence for what he calls the "givens" (which he defines as "that which is given us to receive by calling it by name"), it is not the only, nor even the predominant, strain. Farber is a worldly and sophisticated person who gives and goes to cocktail parties and enjoys gossip as well as more serious talk. He has a novelist's sense of character and situation, and speaks in a lively, improvisational voice. The very titles of his essays—"He Said, She Said," "Family Reunion," "Lying on the Couch," "O Death, Where is Thy Sting-a-ling-a-ling?"—place him with those who have written, in a personal voice and with leisurely, speculative elegance, of familiar yet puzzling aspects of our nature: of jealousy, despair, sex, lying, the family. It is not overstatement to say that, in their originality, depth, and dramatic grasp of the human condition, these essays are absolutely first-rate. Like all great essays, they lead us at once out to the world and to our inmost selves.

CHALLENGING THE CONCLUSIONS



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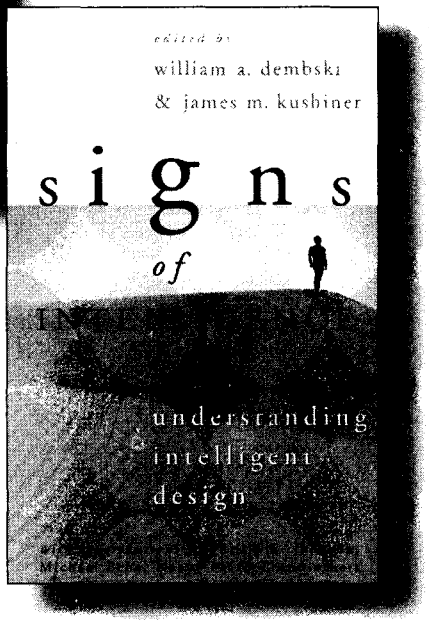

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Farber's excellence as a writer, however, is not all that distinguishes him from others of his profession. His philosophical assumptions about human behavior challenge what amounts to a shibboleth among psychologists: that the cause of present behavior is lodged in personal history. This conviction directs the course of psychotherapy backwards into the past, in the belief that only there will definitive truths, pertinent to present dilemmas, be found. Farber does not deny the influence of personal history on behavior, which would simply be foolish. But he is also keen to the ease with which historical explanations can be turned into self-serving justifications. In addition, he recognizes that, no matter how diligently therapist and patient glean the past for definitive insights, those that are found are useless if the patient lacks the will (or willfully refuses) to make use of them. Farber believes, therefore, that will is a category sui generis, not reducible to insight, libido, or any other construct that attempts to circumvent the knotty and paradoxical issue of human freedom.

As a result of this, Farber eschews case histories in favor of phenomenology. Case histories treat the person's past rather than the person himself as what is important; Farber's approach tries to change that. Each problem he describes opens onto (and opens up) a particular kind of being-in-the-world: the hysteric's addiction to form over content, his disguise of uncertainty by a manner of knowingness; the despairer's pursuit of the "life of suicide" (one of Farber's brilliant phrases); the envier's reluctance to acknowledge another's superiority, and the machinations by which he avoids that acknowledgment; the shrinking of the anxious person's world as all else recedes before his relentless need to control what can't be controlled. In each case, the person described is not a stranger, but someone we ourselves, at one time or another, have been.

It has become part of our received wisdom that the distinguishing characteristic of psychological understanding is that it shows the connections between past experience and present behavior, and that the understanding of a person's past is the sine qua non for modifying its implacable effects. Farber questions this and places instead the concern that the patient be truthful at the heart of psychological understanding. In fact, he believes that it may actually do harm to assume that there is a decisive con-

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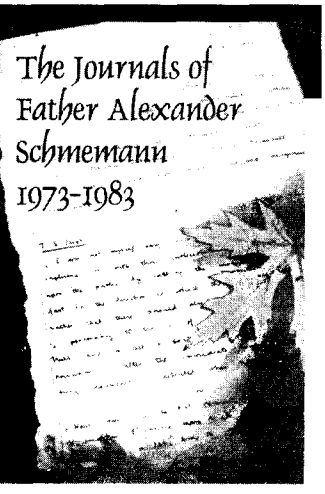

Fr Alexander Schmemann, former Professor of Liturgical Theology and Dean of St Vladimir's Orthodox Seminary, was known for his many-faceted gifts as author, lecturer, theologian and priest. His personal journals, which span the last ten years of his life, offer insight into contemporary culture, church life and the joy of a life lived in Christ.

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nection between past and present and that psychological treatment should search for these supposed causes in the past, and celebrate them when found. He thinks this standard practice minimizes the person's present freedom by privileging truth at the expense of truthfulness. As Farber writes, "The truth that interests me is problematical, partial, modest—and still breathing. It is not normally dramatic and revelatory, and its attainment depends far more on thinking hard than feeling freely. To put it another way: I think that speaking truthfully is a far more fitting ambition than speaking the truth."

It will not be surprising, therefore, that Farber renounces the moral neutrality with which the majority of psychotherapists approach their work. The landscape his patients inhabit is a moral one, in the sense that their actions partake, however obliquely, of the dimension best specified as good and evil. In his writing, the latter term most generally refers to what Farber understands as a desecration of the "givens," a willful refusal to acknowledge their claims. He knows that such refusal may have its roots in painful circumstances, and that it inevitably perpetuates and complicates pain. Despite this, he sees the moment of refusal as a choice. Farber knows all about the deceptions and evasions that beset people at such moments. But he also knows about moments not so tainted, moments of courage, generosity, and the redemptive talk that may accompany an attitude of truthfulness. His belief in the possibility of such moments, and his conviction that people can turn towards (or away from) them, make for the dramatic tension at the heart of his essays.

SINCE FARBER applied his ideas in his practice, it is legitimate to wonder what psychotherapy with him was like. Though he did not write explicitly of psychotherapeutic technique, Emily Fox Gordon's memoir of her psychotherapy with him, which can profitably be read as a companion to *The Ways of the Will*, yields a rich portrait of Farber in action.

Gordon began psychotherapy with Farber while she was an in-patient at Austin Riggs, a psychiatric facility in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, at one point in an already (though she was only in her late teens) long career as a psychotherapy patient. She had come to expect a kind of neutrality, something like Freud's "evenly hovering attention" when she spoke with her therapists, and under its influence had herself become neutral, vague, almost neutered. It was quite a change when she realized that Farber "judged and revealed his judgments." At the first community meeting that he attended at Austin Riggs, she saw the "unmistakable expression of shocked contempt" that came over his face at another patient's offensive remark. Towards her, as well, his attitude was "never the 'unconditional positive regard' with which therapists are charged to view their patients. His regard was highly qualified and partial, and as real as rock." In addition, she learned that, for Farber, psychotherapy was an occasion for personal, truthful, lively talk, and that he expected her to come to sessions "as pulled together as possible—ready to exercise judgment, to make distinctions, to listen and respond, to view myself first as a moral and then a psychological being, most importantly, to tell the truth." Gordon had, apparently, never spoken with someone whose talk was utterly serious but not sententious, and like a prince's kiss, it aroused her from the stupor into which she had drifted.

Although this was clearly therapeutic, Gordon goes on to reveal some of the difficulties that arose from her unconventional treatment. First, she developed an "organ of veneration" for Farber and "things Farberian." This kind of idealization, which would have been noted and analyzed in a more traditional psychotherapy, was apparently never talked about in Gordon's treatment with Farber. Also, Farber invited Gordon to social and family occasions, both to welcome her when she first moved to New York, and, presumably, to enjoy her own lively company. But there is no evidence that they ever discussed how she felt about being included in this way, and if this deviation from standard practice was indeed helpful to her.

Gordon's memoir reveals how she successfully, almost heroically, struggled to maintain a genuine loyalty and devotion to Farber, a mature sense of gratitude for all she gained in her therapy with him, without having to minimize the many ways he was less than helpful and occasionally hurtful. Her present devotion less resembles the "unconditional positive regard" it once was, and has

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become, like Farber's regard for her, "highly qualified and partial, and as real as rock."

That's exactly what Farber would have wanted.

Saving Remnant

The Response of Orthodox Jewry in the United States to the Holocaust: The Activities of the Vaad-Ha-Hatzalah Rescue Committee, 1939-1945. By Ephraim Zuroff. *Hebrew University Press* and *Ktav. 316 pp. $39.50.*

***Reviewed by* William D. Rubinstein**

This work illustrates something of both the best and worst of recent Holocaust scholarship. It is a pioneering study of the attempts by strictly Orthodox Jews, especially in America, to rescue Orthodox Jews in Europe during the Second World War. In particular, this work is a study of the *Vaad-ha-Hatzalah* (Rescue Committee) established by the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada to save as many Jews as possible. No scholarly work has ever been written on this subject before. Indeed, the fate of Europe's Orthodox Jews during the Second World War remains distinctly underexplored, despite the vast and ever-growing literature on the Holocaust. In many respects, as a work of historical scholarship Zuroff's book is admirable, comprehensively using a plethora of little-known sources. Despite the emotionally sensitive nature of the subject, Zuroff maintains a cool head and a scholarly style. His tone, it should be noted, is in welcome contrast to the writings on this subject emanating from ultra-Orthodox publishing houses in the United States, works that have too often been self-congratulatory, extravagant, and jejune.

The Response, however, is marred by two fundamental flaws. While this purports to be a book about the Holocaust, in reality it is not. The first three-quarters of the book do not concern attempts to rescue Jews from the Nazi Holocaust but from Stalinist Russia. Thus the title of the work is misleading. In 1939, Hitler and Stalin divided Poland between them, with the Soviet regime annexing the eastern half of the country, home to perhaps 1.5 million Jews, containing

William D. Rubinstein *is Professor of Modern History at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth.*

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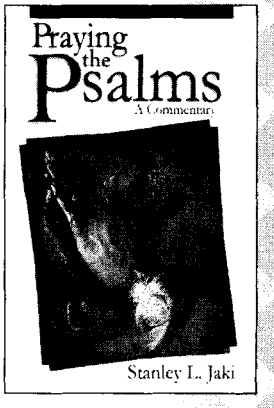

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nearly all of the well-known Orthodox *yeshivot*. In June 1940, the Soviet Union annexed the three Baltic republics, including Lithuania, traditionally one of the main centers of Orthodox Jewry. The Stalinist regime deported an estimated 1.25 million Jews and non-Jews to Siberia; one historian has claimed that 100,000 Jews were killed in this period. Stalin imposed a grim and rapid sovietization of Polish society in the two years of his rule there. For the Jews this meant the destruction of traditional religious life, as well as all manifestations of Jewish identity that didn't fit the Stalinist mold. On the other hand, unlike Hitler, Stalin was not genocidal, and did not kill Jews as such; indeed, historians acknowledge that right-wing Polish anti-Semitism disappeared during this period, while for the very poorest Jews, living standards actually rose.

It is thus towards the Stalinist rather than the Nazi regime that the *Vaad*'s original "rescue" attempts were directed. Since traditional Judaism could not exist in the Soviet Union, the *Vaad*'s efforts were directed at securing visas for Orthodox Jews to places of safety, especially for the rabbis of the famous *yeshivot* and their students. Given the enormous obstacles that existed, it did fairly well, with Shanghai, America, and Palestine receiving small but not insignificant numbers.

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NAZI GERMANY was, of course, another matter. After 1940, the Nazis permitted no exceptions whatever to their policies of genocide, and refused (except in the rarest of cases) to allow Jews to emigrate to safety. Although Zuroff obviously understands this, he rather perversely fails to take it into account in assessing the response of the *Vaad*. For instance, he presents a series of reasons why it did so little to rescue Jews, beginning with its alleged failure to "internalize" news of the Holocaust, but omits the single most important and all-encompassing factor—there was absolutely nothing it could do.

In fact, the proposals the *Vaad* did make for "rescue" were absurd and useless. For instance, it proposed in early 1944 that the newly-created War Refugee Board (not mentioned by Zuroff) "send mercy ships to ghettos"; its other proposals were similarly unrealistic. Not that any of America's other Jewish groups had better ideas. Europe's Jews were prisoners of Hitler, who was engaged in killing all of them, and apart from winning the war as quickly as possible, virtually nothing could be done to save them.

As Zuroff emphasizes, the *Vaad* pursued an independent line in attempting to secure the rescue of Jews from the Nazis. It represented strictly Orthodox Jews, at the time little known and virtually unrepresented among America's Jewish leadership. When the mainstream of American Jewry was publicly quiescent, the *Vaad* repeatedly "made trouble" over the fate of Europe's Jews, even, in October 1943, leading four hundred Orthodox rabbis in a high-profile march on Washington, one of the very few public demonstrations carried out at this time by American Jewry. It pursued unusual avenues in its rescue attempts wherever possible.

Yet in practical terms the *Vaad* accomplished virtually nothing. It managed to rescue at most 1,500 Jews from the Nazis, chiefly by bribery and negotiation, and even the accuracy of this claim is not entirely clear, despite Zuroff's claims. His further assertion that it would have been possible to rescue large numbers of Hungarian Jews through the infamous "blood for goods" deal proposed by Himmler and Eichmann is very dubious, given that Himmler was working behind Hitler's back and keeping him in the dark. Hitler responded to other proposals of this kind with blind fury, and it is virtually inconceivable that he would have agreed to allow the release of large numbers of Hungarian Jews, even assuming that Himmler and Eichmann were serious in their proposal—which is also doubtful. Similarly, Zuroff's claim that the *Vaad*'s "negotiations with the Nazis . . . may have in some way favorably affected the fate of hundreds of thousands of concentration camp inmates" seems to me to border on fiction.

ZUROFF'S BOOK has been read by some as accusing the *Vaad*, during the early part of the war, of being interested in rescuing only Orthodox Jews and not other Jews. Zuroff in fact rightly defends the *Vaad* against this charge, although arguably for the wrong reasons. In interwar Poland, *all* Jewish parties and groupings, among which the ultra-Orthodox party *Agudat Yisrael* was quite important, were closed "way of life" movements, eschewing cooperation with other Jewish (let alone non-Jewish) parties. Orthodox Jews expected this situation to persist under the Soviet regime and they continued to look after their own. Ultra-Orthodox Judaism has, as well, viewed post-biblical Jewish history as consisting of a series of catastrophes from which the Jewish people reemerged because a small "remnant" of Torah-true Jews were, for inscrutable reasons, preserved and allowed to build again. They viewed both the Soviet and Nazi regimes simply as continuations of that history; given the current importance of strict Orthodoxy in the Jewish world, per-

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haps they were, in a sense, right. Zuroff's account of the near-contempt with which both non-Orthodox Jewish leaders like Rabbi Stephen Wise and political leaders like Franklin Roosevelt treated the Union of Orthodox Rabbis is indeed shocking, but that treatment finally made no difference to the fate of Europe's Jews, which was, alas, being decided in Berlin.

A Tendentious Telling

Constantine's Sword: The Church and the Jews. By James Carroll. *Houghton Mifflin. 756 pp. $20.*

***Reviewed by* Thomas F. X. Noble**

Caveat Emptor! This book looks like a bargain, three books for the price of one. It contains a history of Catholicism's relationship with Judaism and the Jews; a plea for a Christology that would, largely, remedy the most distasteful aspects of that history; and an autobiography of the author, a successful novelist and National Book Award winner. Alas, the history is always amateurish and often wrong; the theology is an affront to any form of historic Christianity; and the author comes off as smug, sanctimonious, and unctuous.

Start with the history that Carroll tells and with the way he tells it. Carroll is an amateur historian. He has no degrees in the subject and, to judge from this book, no expertise in either Jewish history or church history. Historians normally work with primary sources—documents roughly contemporary with the events to which they pertain—and with the best scholarship dealing with those documents and with the history surrounding them. Carroll has read no cache of documents for himself and, as far as I can tell, has never crossed the threshold of an archive. Occasionally he cites a source, but a look at his endnotes will always reveal that he has cribbed the reference and quotation from someone else. There is no evidence that he reads Latin, Greek, or Hebrew, and yet he comments in an authoritative tone on histories that demand a knowledge of those languages.

Where modern scholarship is concerned, Carroll's amateurism is compounded by his tendentiousness. That is, for the periods and problems he treats, he tends to cite only one or two studies, saying portentously that a famous author or book "informs" his current discussion. Yet Carroll seems to cite only the author or authors who agree with his views. So, for instance, John Dominic Crossan becomes *the* authority for the New Testament period and John Cornwell serves as *the* biographer of Pius XII. One would not let a college freshman get away with that. Finally, there are monuments of both Jewish and church history produced by European scholars, but I see no titles in French, German, or Italian. Judged on every possible scale, this is a lightweight book—despite its ample girth.

Yes, an amateur can get it right. Did Carroll? I think not. He opens up a key question—how did religious and cultural anti-Judaism turn into murderous anti-Semitism—but fails to handle it adequately. Carroll's central thesis is that a generation or two after the life of Christ, a series of authors, the men we know as the evangelists, decided that it was better to get along with the powerful Romans than the despicable Jews and scripted the first version of the blood libel. That is, they made the Jews the murderers of Christ. They pulled off this clever feat by historicizing the prophecies of the Old Testa-

Thomas F. X. Noble *is Robert M. Conway Director of the Medieval Institute and Professor of History at the University of Notre Dame.*

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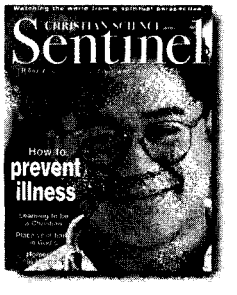

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ment in such a way as to make Jesus Christ appear to be the Messiah. Moreover, they recorded the "intuition" of the apostles and disciples that Jesus rose from the dead. Jesus' contemporaries actually only believed that Jesus' *love* survived him, but as they gradually shifted from praying *for* him to praying *to* him they invented the story of his resurrection. So, in Carroll's telling, the evangelists not only blamed the Jews for killing the man Jesus but for killing the Messiah. Carroll assures us that this account must be true because Crossan and the Jesus Seminar say so. Along the way Carroll cavalierly dismisses Raymond Brown, mentions a few other scholars with whom he has had conversations, and cites as his authority on Christology Rosemary Radford Ruether, with nods in the direction of Edward Schillebeeckx and Hans Küng.

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One hardly knows where to begin in responding to all this. Carroll desperately wants to blame Jesus' death on the Romans. He does say that we cannot quite know what it was that got Jesus in trouble with the authorities but he decides that it is enough to assert that the Romans were meddlesome and murderous. Then he says that it is anachronistic to hold an ancient empire to modern standards of universal human rights but goes on to conclude that Rome did not measure up to minimum (whose?) standards. Carroll's fuzzy and contradictory thinking aside, he simply does not understand the Romans. And I do not think that he understands much about how or why the New Testament books were written, and I am certain that he will persuade few that the New Testament was "a tragic historical mistake."

But to return to Carroll's thesis. The conversion of Constantine was "the second greatest story ever told." The emperor was an exclusionary universalist who imposed his will on the Church. Before a battle Constantine saw a cross in the sky with the words "In this sign you shall conquer." What is more, his mother, Helena, was a relic-monger who went in search of the True Cross and the Seamless Robe. She found them. Accordingly, the Cross became *the* symbol of a militant Christianity that would henceforth cut down its foes. This more or less explains Carroll's title.

But Carroll is not quite through spelling out his thesis. The Nicene Creed, he says, regrettably made Jesus divine but stressed his Incarnation and Resurrection. Then, because of Constantine and Helena, the Council of Constantinople inserted "He was crucified" into the primitive text of the Creed, and thereafter Christ's death, already attributed to the Jews by those inventive evangelists, now replaced his life as the central fact of Christianity. Some Church Fathers, notably John Chrysostom and Ambrose of Milan, were positively vicious in their denunciations of the Jews, but Augustine of Hippo defined the basic Catholic position for centuries when he said that Jews must be permitted to survive, though not to thrive, as a reminder of Christianity's truth.

ALL OF THIS IS, once again, bad history. Any interested reader can find several expert books to correct Carroll's simplifications concerning Constantine. His misunderstanding of the development of the text of the Creed and of the attitude of the Church Fathers toward the Jews is a more serious matter. The so-called Nicene Creed was in a state of evolution for more than a century, but it never at any stage omitted reference to or a grounding in the Crucifixion. The change in terminology that Carroll believes he has discovered is neither significant in itself nor attributable to Constantine and his mother. Sometimes the Fathers of the Church said ugly things about Jews. But they did so not because Jews were helpless victims and Judaism superseded. Quite the contrary. Judaism was thriving in late antiquity and the Fathers were alarmed by what they took to be a real and potent rival.

In any case, the implications of this early history for the future were momentous. There is, Carroll suggests, an "arc" that runs from Golgotha to Auschwitz, and this in two respects. Viewed in one way, it is a two-thousand-year-old narrative of the centrality of the Cross to Western Civilization. Viewed in another way, it means that because the first cross was falsely blamed on the Jews, a second cross could be erected in a place of indescribable Jewish suffering to co-opt and supersede that torment on behalf of the Christians, mainly Poles, who also died at Auschwitz. Put in simplest terms, it is Carroll's argument that Western Civilization has been propelled primarily by Catholicism's hatred for the Jews.

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Having muddled his way through antiquity, Carroll turns to the Middle Ages. Of course, he tells about the wanton massacres of Rhineland Jews on the eve of the First Crusade (1096), the emergence and dissemination of the grotesque stories according to which Jews captured and ritually crucified Christian boys, the bizarre rumors about Jews poisoning wells, the Inquisition and its attempts to force conversion on the Jews, and finally about the many times when Jews were expelled from their homelands, most famously from Spain in 1492. Carroll also mentions the many popes, bishops, and secular rulers who befriended and protected Jews, albeit doing so within the Augustinian "survive but don't thrive" motif.

The story, of course, is a sad one, and the author thinks that the Church has not fully confronted its implications. Carroll repeatedly turns to "We Remember" (1998) and "Memory and Reconciliation" (1999) to insinuate that the Catholic Church was wrong, in the face of the medieval evidence, to claim in those documents that while Catholics did appalling things for which apologies are in order, the Church "as such" did not.

It seems to me that on this subject there has been a dialogue of the deaf. Church authorities have been less frank and forthcoming than they might have been. Most people are not trained to read and understand the subtleties of ecclesiastical pronouncements. It is all well and good for professionals to toss around those "as suchs," but ordinary laypeople need a little help with them. Critics of the Church, for their part, unfailingly read the actions of Catholic individuals or communities as the actions of the Church. Never mind that no medieval pope or council authorized or incited the murder of Jews and that many clerics and councils thundered against the preposterous blood libels. Perhaps someday the passions will cool on both sides of this argument and good sense will prevail.

Back to the history. There are again interesting omissions and mistakes in the book's medieval sections. Carroll interprets the Crusades as the "necessary outcome of an exclusionary and totalitarianizing culture." Why, then, did the crusading movement begin in the late eleventh century and why was it spent by 1300? How do Byzantine vulnerabilities to the Turks and economic rivalries in the Mediterranean basin figure in Carroll's scheme? Why were massacres of Jews a particular feature of the First Crusade? Carroll's only answers to questions like these depend on the violence inherent in the Cross—the Crusaders were, after all, *crucesignati*, signed by the Cross.

But Carroll's obsession with the Cross causes him some other problems. One of the most serious of these has to do with the way he mangles the theology of Anselm of Canterbury, in particular his profound *Cur Deus Homo* (Why God Became Man). Carroll says that Anselm, good Constantinian that he was, wrote this book to prove that Jesus became man to die. This terrible doctrine of atonement, Carroll insists, intensified Catholicism's fixation on the Cross with inevitably murderous results for the Jews, long identified as Christ-killers. To make this point, Carroll cites Jaroslav Pelikan badly and out of context. He seems not to notice that he has no company on the slender branch on which he is perched.

Carroll is not yet done confusing himself and his readers about medieval theology. He likes Peter Abelard because he was a "liberal" and a "humanist." (This from an author who earlier solemnly warned us about anachronism.) Abelard used logic and human reason to arrive at positions that anticipated those of the Jesus Seminar. It was "conservative" monks who did him in. That Anselm was himself an accomplished and innovative logician seems to have escaped Carroll's notice. It almost seems as if Carroll likes St. Thomas Aquinas only because some of his propositions were condemned. But then, Thomas was a logician, so that

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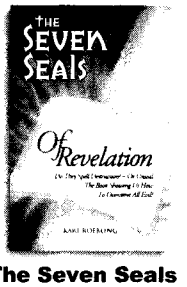

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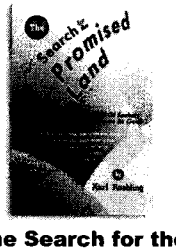

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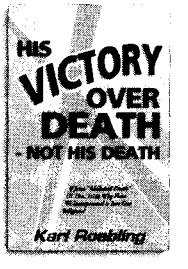

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makes him, like Abelard, a good guy. But Thomas agrees with Anselm more than he does with Abelard. So perhaps Thomas is a bad guy after all.

CARROLL'S HISTORY marches along like this page after page. It is when he gets to the twentieth century that he is at his worst. He concludes, predictably, with Pius XII. He does not think Pius an evil man, just a misguided one whose moral shortcomings caused unprecedented suffering. In Carroll's telling Eugenio Pacelli devoted his life to elevating the centralizing power of the papacy. Thus when he concluded the *Reichskonkordat* with Hitler's new government on behalf of Pius XI in 1933, the point of the exercise was to bring the troublesomely independent German episcopate to heel and, in the bargain, to destroy the German Center Party. This is reductionism on a majestic scale.

The *Konkordat*, it is true, granted precious legitimacy to Hitler's still young government. In hindsight, it would have been better to postpone or retract it. But it is worth remembering that *we* have hindsight; *they* didn't. It is also true that some German Catholics, including intellectuals and members of the clergy, became Nazi party members and wrote disgusting things about Jews. They may have been prompted to do so by their understanding of the *Konkordat*. But larger currents were flowing in those difficult days.

Carroll correctly identifies but seems not to understand the issues that help to explain papal conduct in the 1920s and '30s. Garibaldi's march on Rome, the Paris Commune of 1871, and the Kulturkampf had called into question virtually every aspect of the papacy's historical relationship with rulers and governments. Until the Lateran accords were signed with Mussolini, the popes had been virtual prisoners inside the Vatican. Eugenio Pacelli was trying to reinvent the papacy as an effective, influential institution in a world that seemed to have little need, modest respect, and no fear of it. Moreover, as Carroll says, "the Church had been thrown off balance by liberalism or modernism, that post-Enlightenment confluence of political revolution, intellectual skepticism, and cultural secularism." In the circumstances, and well before the reality of Nazism was apparent to all, it is not so difficult to see how many people, and not just Catholic leaders, were tempted by Nazism's stress on order and authority and by its staunch opposition to Bolshevism and the many decadences of modern culture.

Carroll dismisses anyone who has spoken on behalf of Pius XII as a "defender" or "advocate"; whereas he himself, and his primary source, John Cornwell, are portrayed as disinterested and objective. At one point Carroll dismisses Hannah Arendt because she argued that Catholic Jew-hatred was insufficient to explain Hitler's atrocities. But surely, *pace* Carroll, she was right. Why was there no Holocaust before Hitler? Why Germany? How does one explain Stalin's fanatical anti-Semitism given that he was notoriously unsympathetic to Catholicism? Arendt understated the point.

Carroll wishes for a different future so he imagines different pasts. He talks repeatedly of history as a "drama" and says that the actions of the actors are less interesting than their motivations. Fair enough, but he does a poor job of identifying the motives of the historical actors whom he chooses to discuss. And the historian, unlike the novelist, cannot artfully assign motives. Carroll says that it takes "moral maturity" to recognize the connections between events that others have overlooked or denied. This is fatuous. Page after page of this book would serve admirably in a college history class as an object lesson in false inferences and mistaken links of causation.

THE BOOK adopts several novelistic devices that are annoying and distracting. Again and again Carroll takes the reader back to Trier, a small town in western Germany. It was from Trier that Constantine launched his campaign to become emperor, there that he built a palace, there that Helena installed relics, there that Crusaders murdered Jews, there that Karl Marx was born, and there that the Seamless Robe was displayed twice in the twentieth century, once in 1933 after the *Reichskonkordat* and once in 1959 in Carroll's own presence. Carroll has fixed tenaciously on a series of coincidences and seen in them a pattern of deep meaning.

More annoying, however, is his strategy of telling the story of the Church's relationship with Jews and Judaism as his own personal story. Everything turns on when he learned this, felt that, or was told something else. He has succumbed to the postmodern temptation to assume that, finally, it is all about *me*. Be that as it may, it is both towering arrogance and bad historical method to insist that history depends on, and is precisely coincident with, one's own dawning insights.

Carroll ends with a call for a Third Vatican Council, a call that is unlikely to be answered. He wishes for a Council whose participants would be equally drawn from all the branches of the

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family of man, even those who don't believe or are hostile to the Church. The Council would take as its key responsibility, in so far as the Church itself is concerned, a liberal *aggiornamento*, a completely undiscriminating pluralism, that would, almost certainly, bring the Church to an end. But most implausibly, this Council would retell the gospel story so that Jesus Christ is not uniquely the Son of God and not the Messiah. He died because he was human, and humans die. He did not die for the sins of others. This is a Jesus who would not threaten Jews. No sensible Christian, of course, could embrace this caricature, but one wonders even if theologically serious Jews, such as those who wrote the recent *Dabru Emet* (see "*Dabru Emet*: A Jewish Statement on Christians and Christianity," FT, November 2000), would respect such a Christianity.

BRIEFLY NOTED

In Defense of Tradition: Collected Shorter Writings of Richard M. Weaver, 1929-1963. Edited and with an introduction by Ted J. Smith III. *Liberty Fund. 813 pp. $25 cloth, $15 paper.*

Richard Weaver, it may be said, was conservative when conservatism wasn't cool. A professor of English at the University of Chicago from the mid-1940s until his untimely death in 1963, Weaver is best remembered today for *Ideas Have Consequences* (1948), a meditation on the decline and hoped-for renewal of Western Civilization. Interestingly, the title, proposed by William Terry Couch of the University of Chicago Press, was loathed by Weaver, who described it later as "hopelessly banal" and had even considered withdrawing the manuscript. This new collection of his writings allows the reader to examine a greater body of his work, which includes speeches, essays, and book reviews. The subject matter herein encompasses a broad range of concerns, including Southern history, literature, and culture; political conservatism and the critique of modernity; rhetorical theory; and educational issues in general. All his work is tied together by a concern for eternal verities and time-honored standards. Though he was not straightforwardly religious himself, Weaver's traditionalism is, in essence, a religious worldview. To use Weaver's own words, "What we do . . . is look to an ultimate source of value and judgment, one of whose prescriptions is that we retain the image in which we were made. It is

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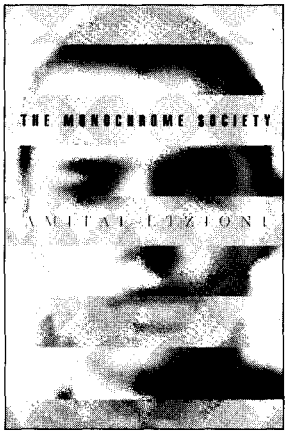

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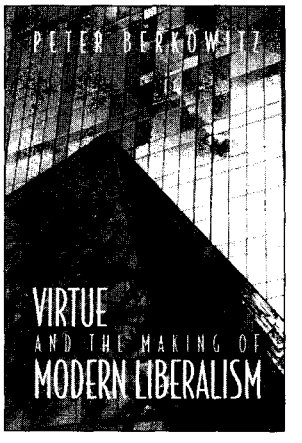

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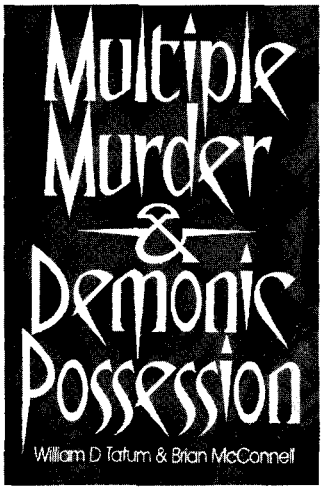

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'the presence among human beings of a non-human power could in certain cases be the only adequate explanation of the aberrant behaviour of such criminals.' **Malachi Martin**, eminent theologian and author of best selling novels including **Hostage to the Devil**

"Tatum's three central ideas are incisive, revolutionary, and of immense social urgency. To be specific, I mean his Forensic Theology, its application with others, and the interchange of its generated data among police authorities world-wide in the preventive search for a non-human source of savage crime as a presence among us."

George Mandel, author of **Crocodile Blood** and other highly praised novels

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this ideal of the human under the aegis of something higher which seems to me to provide the strongest counterpressure against the fragmentation and barbarization of our world."

— *Jeff McAlister*

FUNDAMENTALISM. By STEVE BRUCE. *Polity Press/Blackwell. 136 pp. $59.95 cloth, $24.95.*

Bruce, professor of sociology at the University of Aberdeen, takes on in this essay a set of very large and complicated phenomena associated with what he admits is sometimes too loosely termed "fundamentalism." He begins with a succinct account of the theories of modernity and secularization along the lines advanced by Peter Berger and others some decades ago, offers a valuable overview of current tensions between modernity, politics, and religion in Islam, and concludes with an examination of "the religious right" in the U.S. Bruce argues against theorists who try to explain fundamentalism in terms of psychological disorders or social insecurities. Despite his admirable desire not to be condescending to those whom he calls fundamentalists (people who "take their religion too seriously"), there is a strong note of condescension in his view that they uncritically believe things that the rest of us know to be unbelievable. Along the way of his lucidly presented argument, there are asides that will be of particular interest to students of the sociology of religion. The essay is in a series of "Key Concepts" published by Polity Press in association with Blackwell.

THE SPIRIT AND FORMS OF PROTESTANTISM. By LOUIS BOUYER. *Scepter. 295 pp. $12.95.*

A most welcome reissue of a landmark study that first appeared in 1956 and anticipated important

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developments at the Second Vatican Council in Catholic thought about the "separated brethren." Bouyer, a Lutheran convert to Catholicism who became a leading authority on liturgical and devotional theology, here makes a powerful Catholic case for the chief principles of the Reformation—*sola gratia, sola fide, sola scriptura*—and then argues that, because the Reformers uncritically accepted the nominalism of decadent scholasticism, the "spirit" of the Reformation cannot be sustained within what became the "forms of Protestantism." His immediate antagonist in this book is Karl Barth, and his contention is that Barthianism is but a reactive version of the nominalist error of the liberal Protestantism that Barth wanted to combat. There have been many important developments since 1956, but this book remains among the most incisive examinations of a fundamental difference, if not the fundamental difference, between Catholic and Protestant ways of thinking about, and living, the Christian reality.

The Second One Thousand Years. Edited by Richard John Neuhaus. *Eerdmans. 138 pp. $14.*

Very handsomely put together here are the ten essays in the Millennium Series that appeared in this journal during 1999, plus an extended introductory reflection by Father Neuhaus on what the millennium does and does not mean. Authors include Robert Louis Wilken (on Gregory VII), David Novak (Maimonides), Romanus Cessario (Aquinas), Robert Hollander (Dante), Robert Royal (Columbus), Alister McGrath (Calvin), Edward Oakes (Pascal), Mary Ann Glendon (Rousseau), Jean Bethke Elshtain (Lincoln), and George Weigel (John Paul II). The essays were, in our judgment, splendid in their separate publication and are even better when read together.

Making Patriots. By Walter Berns. *University of Chicago Press. 146 pp. $20.*

An elegantly written tract that explores why we have lost our sense of patriotism as a virtue, and what might be done about it. It is no criticism to say that Berns is clearer about the loss than about the remedy. The author's understanding of patriotism is drawn chiefly from Greek antiquity, although in the American circumstance he appreciates the instrumental contribution of religion-in-general to the cultivation of virtue. The majority of Americans who when they think seriously about patriotism think about it in terms of the claims of Christ and Caesar will not find their concerns engaged by *Making Patriots.* It is, nonetheless, a very thoughtful argument that will reward the attention also of those who have a prior and higher allegiance than the allegiance to country.

Friendship and Ways to Truth. By David B. Burrell. *University of Notre Dame Press. 136 pp. $15.*

A philosophical and theological, yet very personal, reflection on what makes for friendship. Aristotle, Plato, Augustine, Lonergan, and many others come into play in Father Burrell's argument that friendship requires an inter-subjectivity that is impossible without an understanding, based on personal experience, of faith as a way of knowing the truth.

New York Glory: Religions in the City. Edited by Tony Carnes and Anna Karpathakis. *New York University Press. 440 pp. $60.*

John Paul II is not alone in having called New York City "the capital of the world." In the view of many, however, it is also Babylon on the Hudson, the world source of rage against the dominion of God and all things good and true. In fact, New York is as riddled with religion as is the rest of the country, although it is more confusedly riddled. Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox, Jewish, Islamic, Hindu, and a host of other communities come in for attention in these twenty-five chapters of data, analysis, and narrative displaying what one might call, were the term not so abused, the gorgeous mosaic of religion in New York. Preface by Richard John Neuhaus.

Pardon and Peace: A Sinner's Guide to Confession. By Francis Randolph. *Ignatius. 130 pp. $12.95.*

The author is an English priest who writes in a delightful manner reminiscent of Ronald Knox. He writes with priestly wisdom, common sense, and spiritual insight in a way that should greatly benefit those who go to confession regularly or almost never, as well as for those who just wonder what it is all about. A very useful book for penitent and priest alike.

Modernity's Wager: Authority, the Self, and Transcendence. By Adam B. Seligman. *Princeton University Press. 177 pp. $27.95.*

Seligman of Boston University provides an intelligent and eminently civilized reflection on how we might get beyond modernity's notion of the autonomous self, recognizing the irrepressible human need for authority, typically religious authority. The danger, of course, is religious intolerance, in response to which Seligman, following sociologist Peter Berger, suggests that believers must cultivate a measure of skepticism about their beliefs. One might respond, in turn, that a religiously based theory and practice of tolerance requires a non-skeptical belief in the imperative of

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tolerance. While Seligman's proposed resolution of these questions does not satisfy, he offers a fair-minded introduction to questions that will not, and should not, go away.

THE PROMISED END: ESCHATOLOGY IN THEOLOGY AND LITERATURE. By PAUL S. FIDDES. *Blackwell. 299 pp. $62.95.*

A highly specialized survey of contemporary theology, literature, and critical theory dealing with the perception of endings. While the subject matter and many of the thinkers treated lend themselves to the esoteric, the argument is, considering, quite accessible to nonspecialists willing to make the effort.

SPIRITUAL MARKETPLACE: BABY BOOMERS AND THE REMAKING OF AMERICAN RELIGION. By WADE CLARK ROOF. *Princeton University Press. 367 pp. $24.95.*

A sociologist of religion of the old school, Roof teaches at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and here proposes a new "map" of American religion based on a 1988 national survey, with follow-up conversations by Roof with forty people, mainly in California. Roof suggests that Americans can be "mapped" as mainstream believers, born-again Christians, metaphysical believers, spiritual seekers, dogmatists, and secularists. The author is favorably disposed toward "mainstream believers" like himself, and has nothing good to say about evangelicals (a.k.a. fundamentalists) and almost nothing at all to say about orthodox (a.k.a. dogmatic) Catholics. The book may be of interest to the shrinking number of sociologists, and the even smaller remnant of the sociology of religion.

CLASSIC CATHOLIC CONVERTS. By CHARLES P. CONNOR. *Ignatius. 220 pp. $14.95.*

Here are the compelling stories, compellingly told, of Elizabeth Ann Seton, John Henry Newman, Orestes Brownson, Isaac Hecker, Edith Stein, G. K. Chesterton, Jacques Maritain, Dorothy Day, and a host of others as remarkable for their differences as for their earnestness for truth who entered into full communion with the Catholic Church as adults. With the current growth in the number of adult converts, the stories seem strikingly contemporary.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF AMERICAN RELIGION: THE STORY OF A LATE-TWENTIETH-CENTURY AWAKENING. By AMANDA PORTERFIELD. *Oxford University Press. 272 pp. $27.50.*

The author teaches religious studies at the University of Wyoming and relates her personal adventures through various spiritual liberationisms, Western and Eastern, concluding that American religion is being transformed by students exposed to religious studies taught by people like herself. It is an eccentric book that is not without its charms, such as a forty-page typology of American Buddhism that attends to the easily overlooked distinctions between practical, pious, and epistemological Buddhism as refracted through the postmodernist discourse of Jacques Derrida in dialectical tension with the insights of feminist theologians (sic).

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THE PUBLIC SQUARE

A Continuing Survey of Religion and Public Life

Richard John Neuhaus

Bible Babel

"If I had the authority," declared the leader of an evangelical parachurch empire, "I'd almost be ready to decree that we go back to the King James." That in response to my having written here that, if I had the authority, everybody would use the Revised Standard Version. The sorry fact is that English-speaking Christians have largely lost a common biblical vocabulary as a consequence of the proliferation of translations—and of paraphrases passing as translations—over the last forty years. I am told that there are nearly two hundred English translations on the market now, and Bible printers keep churning out new ones, for there seems to be a near insatiable market. There are designer translations for teenagers, mothers, business people, speakers of ebonics (stereotyped black talk), and just about any other market niche or itch that one can imagine.

The result is that little or nothing can be taken for granted when it comes to the recognition of biblical passages or phrases. It is not exactly a matter of biblical illiteracy, for it would seem that millions are regularly reading the Bible, which is a very good thing. But there is little shared biblical language among Christians, and, predictably, ever fewer biblical references in the public culture. The last consequence is not entirely due to the multiplication of versions, of course, but that, one cannot help but believe, is part of it.

When in the 1950s J. B. Phillips published his loose but suggestive translation of parts of the New Testament, it seemed like a breath of fresh air. No less a literary authority than C. S. Lewis wrote an appreciative introduction for Phillips' *Letters to Young Churches*. But now things have gotten quite out of hand, as every Bible student who has a new idea about what the text *really* means decides not to write a commentary on the text but to rewrite the text. Catholic lay people, it is no secret, were not heavy-duty Bible readers before the Second Vatican Council. But for public and private purposes, the English text was the Douay-Rheims translation of the Latin Vulgate, first appearing in the sixteenth century and updated until 1763. After the Council, Catholics, too, got into new translations, notably with the Jerusalem Bible, the New Jerusalem Bible, and then, from the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, regular updatings of the New American Bible.

At present, three translations are approved for Catholic liturgical use: the New Jerusalem, the RSV, and the New American Bible (NAB). The lectionaries and the several publishers of Mass guides, however, use only the NAB. It is, not to put too fine a point on it, a wretched translation. It succeeds in being, at the same time, loose, stilted, breezy, vulgar, opaque, and relentlessly averse to literary grace. The bishops had the NAB updated to the Revised New American Bible (RNAB), but Rome had objections to that and hurriedly appointed a committee to fix it up into what might be called the Amended Revised New American Bible (ARNAB), which will soon become mandatory in lectionary use. Technically, the RSV and New Jerusalem are still permitted but, with ARNAB as the mandatory translation of the future, nobody has any interest in printing lectionaries or Mass guides using those versions. There is the additional oddity that you cannot buy an ARNAB Bible, since only the pericopes (liturgical readings) exist in ARNAB-talk. So Catholics do not have a Bible for personal or group reading that uses the same text that they hear at Mass.

An additional wrinkle is that the Canadian bishops approved for liturgical use the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), with its gender-inclusive and dumbed-down language. Rome overruled the bishops,

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but the Canadians said, in effect, "Too bad, but thousands upon thousands of lectionaries have already been printed in NRSV." So Rome said that no more could be printed, but the ones already printed could be used. Not surprisingly, there is reportedly a very brisk business of "progressive" priests in the U.S. importing Canadian lectionaries. It is, all in all, a sorry tale.

As if the above is not confusion enough, there is in addition the Liturgy of Hours, the breviary for daily prayer. There the psalms are from the 1963 Grail translation, with other biblical canticles translated by the International Committee on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) and yet others by the International Consultation on English Texts (ICET), with the result that, as also in daily Mass guides used by the people, the very same texts frequently appear in different translations. The antiphon to a psalm that is taken from the psalm being read, for example, is often worded differently from the way it appears in the psalm. The banality of the translations does not invite the memorization of biblical texts, and the different and frequently conflicting translations make such memorization impossible. The incessant patchwork meddling and updating of liturgical reform in the last several decades has produced what critics describe as a "destabilizing of the sacramental order." That destabilization is dramatically evident also in the mish-mash that has been made of biblical translations.

The Conciliar Vision

That, one may suggest with considerable confidence, is not what the fathers of the Council had in mind. Section 22 of *Dei Verbum* (The Word of God): "But since the word of God should be available at all times, the Church with maternal concern sees to it that suitable and correct translations are made into different languages, especially from the original texts of the sacred books. And if, given the opportunity and the approval of Church authority, these translations are produced in cooperation with the separated brethren as well, all Christians will be able to use them." At least in the English-speaking world, that maternal concern has been seriously delinquent; there are no common translations among Catholics, never mind translations used by all Christians in common. Again, the word of God in the ARNAB version to be used in liturgy, unsatisfactory as it is, is not available at all in the form of a complete Bible. In the absence of a quality English text, it seems that Catholics will have to put up with a linguistic destabilization of Babel-like proportions.

A not uninteresting sidelight is that St. John's University in Collegeville, Minnesota, sometimes described as a training camp for liturgical terrorists, is spending several million dollars to have a scribe illuminate on vellum the entire Bible. You may have noticed the news stories on that. It's a lovely idea, except that the text to be used is the NRSV. So here we will have a beautifully illuminated vellum manuscript that will last a thousand years, with a trendy text—and, not incidentally, a text officially disapproved by Rome—that is as dated as last year's edition of the politically correct handbook.

There are some fine and generally felicitous translations available: The New American Standard, the New International Version (NIV), the New Jerusalem, and, above all, the RSV. The NIV is by far the most used among evangelical Protestants who don't use the King James Version (which is often used in one of several modified forms, such as the New King James, which pretty much limits its revisions to replacing obsolete words and phrases that would not be understood today). Catholics will, for the foreseeable future, be stuck with ARNAB in public reading, and then whatever version for personal and group study. Of the many versions available, one hopes they will choose to counter the rude liberties taken by ARNAB with the gracefully accurate text of the RSV.

FT

CRADLE CATHOLICS, AND OTHERS

At the risk of generalizing, let me generalize. It applies to Catholics but not to Catholics only, as we will see. A reviewer of Avery Cardinal Dulles' fine little introduction to Catholicism, *The New World of Faith*, was puzzling over why he really didn't like the book. Then it struck him that Dulles, as an adult convert, treats Catholicism as a discovery, while for the reviewer, a cradle Catholic, the Church is the inherited and taken for granted reality. Dulles writes about Catholicism as a "magnificent artifact" to be cherished and cared for, whereas for the reviewer being Catholic is mainly a matter of, as he puts it, "negotiating an accommodation with the larger culture."

In other words, for Dulles that "larger culture" is the inherited and taken for granted reality, while Catholicism is the new and exciting thing. The

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pastor of a Catholic parish tells me that he would not want a priest on his staff who does not read the *New York Times* every day. He said nothing about whether the priest should pray his office, the Liturgy of Hours, every day. Clearly, the pastor is in the mode of negotiating with the larger culture; the goal is rising above the Catholic thing, not deeper immersion in the Catholic thing.

Similarly, a friend who taught at an Ivy League university for years underwent a born-again experience under Baptist auspices. For his sabbatical year he decided to teach at an evangelical college. He discovered, he said, that his most self-consciously sophisticated evangelical colleagues at the college were the most parochial. They were so touchingly eager to demonstrate to him and others that they were in conversation with what he viewed as the stiflingly parochial discourses of the Ivy League that he knew all too well. They evidenced, he said, a practiced aloofness from, bordering on contempt for, the Baptist faith and life that was for him a refreshing alternative to "the larger culture."

The Catholic counterparts of those colleagues are legion. Priests and academics born into Catholicism tend to know all the inside stories, the flaws and foibles and legendary figures of the Church, and can regale one another with the rich lore of its characters and scandals. It is one big extended family. In that company, status is often contingent upon demonstrating that one has transcended the "Catholic ghetto." That explains, at least in large part, why dissent from official teaching carries the panache of being sophisticated. The disposition is: "Yes, I am a Catholic (or a priest, or a theologian), but I think for myself." The remarkably improbable assumption is that what one thinks up by oneself is more interesting than what the Church teaches.

That view is frequently marked by what might be called ecclesiastical fundamentalism. The fundamental realities that constitute the Church are so taken for granted that it is simply inconceivable that dissent or taking liberties at the edges could do any real damage. Typically, such people really do love the Church, it really is their mother, but, like adolescents breaking loose from parental tutelage, they feel a need to distance themselves from her embrace. That would seem to be the case with the reviewer who is puzzled by Cardinal Dulles' discovery of Catholicism as a "magnificent artifact." It may be easier for converts, but for everyone that sense of discovery and rediscovery is the key that opens the door to what Cardinal Dulles calls *The New World of Faith.*

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ELIMINATING THE SOUL

Today we speak of clinical depression, but going back as far as we have records of what people thought, the phenomenon was called melancholy. It is from two Greek words, *melas* (black) and *khole* (bile). Melancholy has to do with humoral states, the Greeks taught. As there are four elements—earth, air, fire, and water—so human health depends upon the right balance among four humors or substances in the body: blood, phlegm, black bile, and yellow bile. The spleen was commonly thought to be the villain in producing black bile, an excessive amount of which produced melancholy, although sometimes blame was attached to the gallbladder as well. (The fact that I had both removed some years ago may help explain my relentlessly sunny disposition.) These matters are treated in a manner both charming and instructive by Jennifer Radden of the University of Massachusetts in a new anthology, *The Nature of Melancholy: From Aristotle to Kristeva* (Oxford University Press).

The anthology includes, of course, an extensive excerpt from the seventeenth-century *Anatomy of Melancholy* by Robert Burton, who wrote, "The Tower of Babel never yielded such confusion of tongues as this Chaos of Melancholy doth variety of symptoms." Burton went on to write, "I would advise him, that is actually melancholy, not to read this Tract of Symptomes, lest he disquiet or make himselfe for a time worse, and more melancholy than he was before." Radden offers a most catholic selection of thinkers, from Galen to Cassian the monk and Teresa of Ávila, up through Kant, Freud, and today's pharmaceutical managers of depression. Melancholy is most generally understood as feelings of intense sadness or fear without sufficient cause. But, as Radden makes clear, almost each word in that sentence—feelings, sadness, fear, cause—has been subjected to centuries of theorizing and dispute.

A remarkable fact is that contemporary thought about melancholy or depression has come full circle back to the theory of humors. Kant proposed that melancholy, indeed all mental disorder, has its cause in illogic, false belief, or delusion. Almost nobody today is a Kantian on that score. Freud had, as one might expect, fascinating fantasies about loss, narcissistic retrojection, and longing for the mother's breast, or whatever. And of course he still has his true believers. Others, notably feminist theorists, contend that melancholy is culturally constructed. But after all these centuries, the dominant scientific view is that of the science of Greek antiquity: melancholy is caused by an imbalance of something or the other, call them humors, in the body. The big difference today, of

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course, is that relentless experimentation has discovered that drugs can somehow or another—nobody quite knows why—affect such imbalances and relieve the symptoms of melancholy, now called depression.

Among the merits of *The Nature of Melancholy* is its modesty. Implicit in Radden's presentation is her warning against the simple-minded reductionism of those who, still today, claim scientific authority for their belief that moods, emotions, and mind itself are all to be explained by material causation. The advanced thinkers of Germany in the nineteenth century produced a school of thought known as *somatism*, which, joined to the multiplying classifications of psychiatry, produced phrenology. Phrenology was proclaimed as an exact science in which the study of the shape of the skull was thought to reveal mental faculties and character. Such pseudo-science, then and now, was explicitly aimed at downgrading or denying the moral, spiritual, and intellectual dimensions of human thought and action.

Aristotle, Galen, Cassian, and other worthies understood that man is both soul and body—an embodied soul or, as some preferred, an ensouled body. The body affects the soul, and the soul affects the body. The first affect depends on what, for lack of a better term, they called the humors. It is not evident that we have a better term today. What we do have is much greater experimental knowledge about the pharmaceutical manipulation of whatever-they-are-to-be-called. That is, for many people, a great blessing. Unless they are seduced into believing, with the materialists of yesterday and today, that such manipulation means that they do not have a soul.

FT

SOMETHING LIKE, JUST MAYBE, A CATHOLIC MOMENT

(The twelfth in a series on the idea of "Christian America.")

There are three main constellations of American Christianity—mainline/oldline Protestantism, evangelical Protestantism, and Roman Catholicism. I turn now to Catholicism, the third force in the confused religio-cultural mix of Christian America. Before he died in 1967, Father John Courtney Murray, who had a key role in the Second Vatican Council's teaching on religious freedom, speculated that the day was not far off, and perhaps had already come, when Catholics would succeed establishment (read mainline) Protestantism in providing a moral and philosophical rationale for the American experiment in liberal democracy. At the time, most thought that a highly implausible suggestion. But again, history has many ironies in the fire.

Harvard historian John T. McGreevy, writing in the June 1997 issue of the *Journal of American History*, tracks the curious course of Catholicism from being the perceived enemy of democracy to becoming a candidate for its intellectual rejuvenation. "Thinking on One's Own: Catholicism in the American Intellectual Imagination, 1928-1960," to which I have referred before, is a masterful documentation of the pervasiveness of anti-Catholic prejudice among the brightest and best of America's intellectual class. This was not a prejudice that can be lightly dismissed as bigotry; it was a reasoned prejudice, based upon an apparently plausible logic. In an era when public intellectuals such as John Dewey seemed to reign supreme, it was understood, first, that devotion to democracy is the preeminent American value. The second doctrine was that democracy requires people who are disposed to "thinking on one's own." Third, the Catholic Church is the sworn enemy of that disposition. Conclusion: the Catholic Church is the enemy of democracy.

What is most striking from McGreevy's research is the pervasiveness, the sheer taken-for-grantedness, of the above prejudice. In major research universities, the appointment of a Catholic in fields such as history, political science, or philosophy sparked heated controversies, quite explicitly about whether a Catholic was free to be honest in his teaching and research. Defenders of such appointments argued that candidates were qualified *despite* their being Catholics, or offered assurances that they were not very serious Catholics. Much in the manner, one might note, that John F. Kennedy was elected after he assured the Baptist ministers of Houston that he was not a very serious Catholic—although, to be sure, not in quite those words. (One notes in passing that, contrary to some tellings of the story, Fr. Murray, far from being party to Kennedy's statements on religion in the 1960 campaign, was appalled by them.)

As mentioned earlier, the certification of Catholics as Good Americans was bestowed under liberal auspices. In the more than two hundred Catholic colleges and universities in America, older faculty members well remember the bad old days documented by McGreevy. They vehemently resist the current trend toward strengthening the "Catholic identity" of these institutions, fearing a return to what is called an "intellectual ghetto." Any association with authoritative Catholic teaching is thought to threaten

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an authoritarianism that would be the death of academic freedom, understood as "thinking on one's own."

McGreevy offers a different reading of the current circumstance. The idea of the autonomous individual "thinking on one's own" is no longer what it was once cracked up to be. "An emphasis on individual rights, in this view, can occur at the expense of the more prosaic politics of compromise and institution building. Some philosophers extend this point to argue that moral traditions mark the beginning of genuine discussion, not simply a roadblock to thinking on one's own. The cumulative effect of this fascination with intellectual and social 'community' changes lingering apprehensions about the threat posed to social cohesion by Catholic schools and churches into admiration." The impetus toward parental choice and genuine pluralism in education, for instance, has in recent years been largely driven by admiration for the academic and moral achievements of Catholic schools. The philosophical extension of this change is evident in the work of thinkers such as Alasdair MacIntyre on the indispensability of authoritative moral traditions.

I once wrote, a few years before I became a Catholic, a book titled *The Catholic Moment: The Paradox of the Church in the Postmodern World.* Some, both among those who loved it and those who were less than pleased, mistook it for a "triumphalist" argument that Catholicism now had the upper hand and was more or less in charge of the religio-cultural redirection of the American experiment. The argument, in fact, was and is that Catholicism is uniquely situated to work with other Christian communions, and very specifically with evangelical Protestantism and Judaism, in reconstituting the public culture of that experiment. We have already considered the ways in which Catholics have been deeply ambivalent about the idea of Christian America. Chesterton's "nation with the soul of a church" runs up against allegiance to a universal Church that was here long before America, and will be here long after the sun has set upon the American Moment in world history.

Six Ages of the Church

This is not to suggest that America is incidental or of little consequence in the self-understanding of the Catholic Church. The Church has had sobering experience, however, with those who propose grandiose schemes about what God is doing in history. Among the more spectacular instances is Joachim of Fiore, a twelfth-century Cistercian monk, who divided all of history into three ages—an age of the Father, an age of the Son, and a dawning age of the Holy Spirit. While Joachim tried always to be orthodox (Dante placed him in his Paradise), the following centuries saw sundry fanaticisms that picked up on Joachim's grand scheme, turning it to revolutionary purposes that continued into the twentieth century—a story compellingly told by Norman Cohn in *The Pursuit of the Millennium.* Similarly, American Protestantism has witnessed "dispensationalist" prophets who read the signs of the times with the Bible (notably the books of Daniel and Revelation) in one hand and the daily newspaper in the other, sometimes setting specific dates for the various stages leading to the End Time. It is not only the marginal and eccentric, however, who have made prophetically charged proposals about the meaning of America in world history. In Ernest Tuveson's *Redeemer Nation* and other studies, we find ample documentation of the most careful thinkers, both secular and religious, who have been convinced that the discovery and ascendancy of the New World heralds a New Age of cosmic consequence.

A justified skepticism about such intoxicating visions can too easily slide into the jaded conclusion that there is no purpose or sustained narrative to be discerned in history. The course of wisdom for those who believe that God is also the Lord of history is to avoid both cynicism and enthusiasm in trying to discern the unfolding narrative. Within this larger story, one may try to understand the possible meaning of Christian America in God's purposes. In the 1930s, the great and very sober historian Christopher Dawson was thinking about "the six ages of the Church," with specific reference to America.

To very briefly summarize, Dawson said there was first the Apostolic Age, which "stands in a sense outside the course of Church history as the archetype of spiritual creativity." The second age began with the fourth-century conversion of the emperor Constantine, the establishment of Christendom, the theological writings of the great Church Fathers, the doctrinally pivotal decisions of Councils, the flourishing of art, architecture, and letters. The second age came to an end with the loss of the Christian East and the seventh-century conquest of Islam in Syria, Egypt, North Africa, and most of Spain. The third age witnessed a new Christian culture in Europe—"ineptly termed 'medieval,'" according to Dawson—in which "the relation between religion and culture was closer than in any other period." Irish and Anglo-Saxon missionaries created a new Christendom of a "Latin ecclesiastical culture" that would be the basis of subsequent civilizations, and found its most ambitious expression in the Carolingian Empire, all of which would finally succumb to the barbarian invasions from the North and East. The fourth age began with the reform movement of the eleventh

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century that united the papacy and monasteries in resisting the secularization of the Church and its absorption into feudal society. Among the great heroes of that age were Gregory VII, Anselm of Canterbury, Bernard of Clairvaux, and Francis of Assisi. They asserted the independence of the Church and broke with the traditional order to make the papacy an instrument for the evangelization of the masses and international mission.

But the princes, such as Philip IV of France, would in time have their revenge. Secular rulers, with an assist from radical movements of reform such as the Wycliffites and the Hussites, would lead to the Great Schism in the papacy itself, with competing popes, Rome debauched, and the stage set for what is called *the* Reformation, which separated most of Northern Europe from Catholicism, and thus delivered a large part of Christianity into the custody of the secular authority. The fifth age of the Church, according to Dawson, is the Counter-Reformation or the Tridentine Reform, which witnessed also great missionary expansion in the Far East and the Americas, as well as the highest development of Catholic mysticism and the art, architecture, literature, and devotional practices that go by the name of Baroque. But the Catholic revival that was Baroque culture was short-lived, being too closely tied to Catholic monarchies, and everything was swept away by the French Revolution and allied enemies of the ancien régime. At the start of the nineteenth century, "In the eyes of secular opinion, the Catholic Church had been abolished as a superannuated relic of the dead past." Then began the sixth age.

"Yet in spite of all these disasters," Dawson writes, "the Church did recover and the revival of Catholicism took place, so that the Church was in a far stronger position by 1850 than it had been a hundred years before when it still possessed its ancient wealth and privileges." Key to this recovery is the American experience. "Indeed the whole history of Catholicism in the United States belongs to this sixth age and is in many aspects typical of the new conditions of the period." Catholicism in America is essentially urban, whereas in Europe it was still mainly rooted in the peasantry, and it is vigorously independent from the state. "At the present day it is the American rather than the European pattern which is becoming the normal condition of the Church everywhere."

Historians know that there is inevitably an element of the arbitrary in putting vast stretches of history into periods. The real world does not work, things do not happen, in obedience to our chronological schemes. Dawson knew that, as he also knew that the story is far from over. "I have spoken of the Six Ages of the Church—there may be sixty before the universal mission of the Church is completed. But each age has its own peculiar vocation which can never be replaced, and each, to paraphrase [Leopold von] Ranke's famous saying, stands in a direct relation to God and answers to Him alone for its achievements and its failures. Each, too, bears its own irreplaceable witness to the faith of all."

Springtime and Springboard

This, then, suggests the world-historical context within which one should think about the part of Catholicism in Christian America. Nor should one think of Catholicism in any exclusive sense, for it is the teaching of the Catholic Church that she is the gravitational center through time of the entire Christian movement. Needless to say, not all Christians agree with that, or, if they do agree, they do not understand it in the same way. The Catholic view is that the story of the Church, which is the reality of Christ through time, is the story of the world, the *axis mundi*, the center upon which world history turns, and the end toward which it presses. Of course that is a theological proposition that will not be convincing to those who do not accept certain truth claims about Christ and his Church. Dawson's idea of the importance of the "American pattern" for the future, however, does not depend entirely upon those theological truth claims.

The pontificate of John Paul II has paid closer and more appreciative attention to the American experience than any pontificate since the discovery of the New World. Major teaching initiatives of the pontificate have drawn on the American experience in important ways. I examined in the book *Appointment in Rome: The Church in America Awakening* the ways in which this American prominence poses problems for Rome. It would not do for the world's premier spiritual center to be too closely associated with the world's premier political and economic power. That is why, incidentally, it is most unlikely that there will be a pope from the United States in the twenty-first century. It is also why, when the Pope convened a Synod for America at the end of 1997, "America" was in the singular. A greater consciousness of unity between North, Central, and South America is, he believes, essential to holding the United States accountable to the diversity of the cultural, economic, and political worlds present in the one America. To be held accountable to the countries South of us is to be held accountable to the similar worlds of, for instance, Africa and Asia. At the same time, America is now the demographic center of the universal Church, with about two-thirds of the more than one billion Catholics in the world living in the Western

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Hemisphere, which includes the countries with the three largest Catholic populations—Brazil, Mexico, and the United States, in that order. (By some counts, the Philippines is neck and neck with the U.S.)

As noted earlier, the two largest and fastest growing sectors of the Christian movement in the world are Catholicism and evangelical Protestantism (the latter including Pentecostalists, who frequently distinguish themselves from evangelicals). In his 1999 post-synod apostolic exhortation, *Ecclesia in America*, delivered in Mexico City, John Paul II reiterated his belief that the third millennium holds the promise and imperative of a "springtime of world evangelization." He stressed that the imperative of evangelization must be joined to the imperative of ecumenism, so that, in Latin America and elsewhere, Christians will evangelize with one another rather than against one another. Christians in the United States are uniquely situated for this anticipated springtime of evangelization.

Among evangelical Protestants, it has long been a commonplace, going well back into the nineteenth century, that God has so arranged things that America is to be the springboard of world evangelization. That way of thinking is haunted by memories of the Redeemer Nation, manifest destiny, cultural imperialism, and associated excesses of national hubris. Such excesses are at least tempered, if not precluded, by the understanding of a Christian movement that locates any American Moment within the context of ages past and ages to come, and within a community of faith that is truly universal. Such is the perspective provided, or the perspective that should be provided, by Catholicism, the third major player in our religio-cultural story. To think we know God's precise purpose for Christian America in world history is presumption. To assume there is no such purpose is a loss of intellectual and spiritual nerve.

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WHILE WE'RE AT IT

■ Am I not aware that many Jews oppose the State of Israel? The question is asked from time to time in response to our references to Judaism and Israel. The answer is that I am keenly aware of such opposition. During my years as a Lutheran pastor in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn, I was intensely involved in community leadership and had regular and interesting dealings with the Satmar community, a Hasidic group that, along with other sectors of "Torah Jewry," believes that Zionism and the State of Israel directly contradict God's plan of exile and redemption. These communities cannot be dismissed as irrelevant "sects," as some more established Jewish organizations tend to dismiss them. Until after World War II, anti-Zionism was the dominant position among Jews in the U.S. and the world. Torah-based anti-Zionism can invoke venerable rabbinical authority and is today a significant force, especially in Israel. For those seriously interested in the subject, the literature of Neturei Karta International makes an articulate case for the anti-Zionist position (102 Saddle River Road, P.O. Box 81, Monsey, New York 10952). That having been said, however, it is worrying that the question of Jewish anti-Zionism is typically raised to me by non-Jews who are pro-Palestinian or, for whatever reason, critical of U.S. support for Israel. Whether Zionism and the State of Israel contradict what the Torah teaches about exile and redemption is a question for rabbinical scholars. For the rest of us, and most particularly for Christians, the inescapable imperative is to recognize the connections between Israel and the survival of living Judaism. There is much to criticize about the actions of the Israeli government, and the country's founding was undoubtedly attended by serious injustices, but our devotion to the security and flourishing of Israel should be beyond question. There are well-informed Jews who are deeply committed to Israel and yet say privately that they do not think the nation will outlive this century. Only God knows. We know, however, that, with respect to the safety and well-being of living Judaism, Christians must never again be found wanting. So yes, I am well aware that there are Jews who are opposed to Zionism and the State of Israel. That is a reality for Jews to work out. For the rest of us, our duty is clear. Or so I have been led to conclude after years of pondering, with more than a little prayer, the tortured history of Jews and Christians through the centuries, and not least in the unspeakable wickedness of the century just past.

■ How will the Supreme Court decision, *Bush v. Gore*, and its consequences look in "the cold light of history" from the perspective of 2050? That was the question that the editors of the *Chronicle of Higher Education* put to nine scholars and writers. Most of the answers were not cold; they were not even cool. Cass Sunstein of the University of Chicago condemns the decision, but says that from the perspective of 2050, it put paid to a short period of liberal judicial activism. The result was that the courts retreated from lawmaking and, as a result, democratic principles were revived. "It is ironic but true that the illegitimate, undemocratic, and unprincipled decision in *Bush v. Gore* deserves much

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of the credit." He's wrong about the decision, but I hope he's right about its consequence. Harvey Mansfield of Harvard writes of the election and the role of the Court: "The two parties were very much themselves throughout. The Republicans stand for the rule of law, and the Democrats for the rule of the people. . . . It really was a contest of principle between two parties." That strikes me as true, in largest part. In his contribution, Gore Vidal says we need a new Constitution. He would say that. Sanford Levinson, professor of law at the University of Texas, says that crises in subsequent elections did in fact result in a new Constitution being approved by popular referendum, which caused considerable civil unrest, but in 2050 is almost unanimously accepted. Eric Foner, professor of history at Columbia, says the decision was a raw act of partisanship and discredited the Supreme Court for decades. Richard Rorty of Stanford writes: "Now, in 2050, it still seems incredible that the Justices whom legal historians call 'the Scalia five' could have thought it more important to ensure Bush's election, and thus the nomination of Justices who would enlarge their majority, than to retain the respect almost all Americans had for the Court." It is bittersweet that so many on the left are now alarmed by the judicial usurpation of politics. My own view is that the Supreme Court decision that prevented Mr. Gore from counting in Florida until he got the result he wanted was legitimate, but we need not have a big fight about that, if only we get the ironic outcome that Professor Sunstein anticipates.

■ Sydney Smith, who died in 1845, deserves to be better remembered than he is. Not that it would do him any particular good, but it might lighten the weight of our burdened times. A worldly clergyman, staunch Whig, and canon of St. Paul's who favored a Church of England on friendly terms with the world as it ridiculously was, Smith was a man of singular wit and good humor. He was also the founding spirit of the *Edinburgh Review*, a journal of erudition, vivid writing, and striking intelligence launched in March 1802 and unmatched in the history of publishing until, some say, March of 1990. G. K. Chesterton deemed Smith to be the originator of the English "nonsense" genre, to which of course the great GKC made inestimable contributions. Smith practiced with a vengeance Dr. Johnson's admonition to clear the mind of cant, which some targets of his critical scintillations did not appreciate. He was with some frequency accused of being arch and uncharitable (a formulation employed, I notice, by a critic of these pages in the course of writing in *Commonweal* a generally favorable review of books I've recently committed). My sympathy for Smith was reignited by the reissue of Hesketh Pearson's 1934 celebration, *The Smith of Smiths* (Akadine Press), a delightful read to be warmly recommended. My sympathy is tempered, to be sure, by the inconvenience of Smith's being so often wrong. But, whether right or wrong, he was seldom dull. When, for instance, a church commission recommended steps toward equalizing pay among the clergy, Smith protested that this ignored the legitimate and inescapable part that Mammon plays in inducing able men to scramble for ecclesiastical prizes. We are living, Smith wrote, "not in the age of the apostles, not in the abstract, timeless, nameless, placeless land of the philosophers, but in the year 1837, in the porter-brewing, cotton-spinning, tallow-melting kingdom of Great Britain, bursting with opulence, and flying from poverty as the greatest of human evils. . . . I must take this people with all their follies, and prejudices, and circumstances, and carve out an establishment best suited for them, however unfit for early Christianity in barren and conquered Judea." As admirable as is Smith's alertness to the particularities of circumstance, his was also a formula for the perfect cultural accommodation of Christianity that produced the decline and distemper of the Church of England so evident in the last century and more. Yet his manner of expressing himself, albeit too often in the service of views unworthy of his talents, makes *The Smith of Smiths* such a pleasure. Like his lesser heirs in the writing of what GKC called nonsense, he was happier and made others happier by refusing to take undue notice of humorless critics complaining that he was sometimes arch and uncharitable.

■ First published in 1956, *One Shepherd, One Flock* by Oliver Barres, now reissued by Catholic Answers of San Diego, California, is the kind of book that went out of favor for a long time following the Second Vatican Council. It is a form of apologetics that used to be unapologetically called a "conversion story." Told with literary and intellectual grace, it is the story of Barres and his wife Marjorie, both Congregationalist ministers, seeking the truth and finding it in the Catholic Church. In the original introduction, which is included in the new edition, the legendary Catholic apologist Frank J. Sheed quite despairs of what today we call ecumenism. For him, there were the endlessly splintering heretical sects blown hither and yon by the whimsy and passions of "private judgment," and then there was the sure voice of the Shepherd heard by those gathered around the successor of Peter. The new edition also has a foreword by Avery Cardinal Dulles, who as a young man in 1940 entered into full communion. He writes, "The republication of books such as this fits well into

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the present-day spiritual climate." That climate, he suggests, is one in which people are moving beyond ecumenism-as-niceness to the search for what is abidingly and certainly true. "By showing how they came to believe in doctrines such as these [Petrine office, infallibility, Mary and the saints, et al.], converts such as Oliver Barres can make a special contribution to authentic ecumenism and to the reinvigoration of Catholic Christianity." I agree with Dulles (I almost added "of course," so often do I agree with him), yet it cannot be denied that there is still today a felt tension between Catholic apologetics such as *One Shepherd, One Flock* (and, for that matter, the entire mission of Catholic Answers) and what John Paul II has repeatedly described as the Church's "irrevocable commitment to ecumenism." I well remember hearing Cardinal Willebrands declare at the Extraordinary Synod in Rome in 1985, "'Return' is not a word in our ecumenical vocabulary." But "return" is very much the theme of much contemporary apologetics, such as Scott and Kimberley Hahn's immensely popular book, *Rome Sweet Home.* And, as I can personally testify, "return" and "coming home" is the irrepressible sensation of one making the ecclesial transition into full communion with Rome. It is also, as our interlocutors in ecumenical dialogue testify, a source of uneasiness in our conversations. There is an undeniable asymmetry between the Catholic community and others—in size, history, influence, and ecclesial claims. For Protestants in dialogue there is the unspoken, or usually unspoken, question, "Why aren't you a Catholic?" Catholics in dialogue, by way of contrast, do not sense that anyone is seriously asking why they are not Lutherans or Baptists or Presbyterians. Cardinal Dulles is right that there should be no conflict between authentic ecumenism and reinvigorated Catholic apologetics. But there can be such a conflict, and attention must be paid lest the integrity of the search for visible unity among Christians, based upon respect for others and their convictions, is undermined. The compelling beauty of a testimony such as *One Shepherd, One Flock* should not be muted, even as ecumenism engages proposals for other ways toward the realization of the hope asserted by the title of Oliver Barres' fine book.

■ Martin E. Marty quotes Katha Pollitt, who writes in the *Nation* that it is wrong that nurses and other hospital workers are allowed, for reasons of conscience, not to assist in abortions and other aspects of what she calls "modern reproductive health care." Pollitt is especially exercised by the influence of Catholic hospitals on health care. She writes: "What about the idea that if my 'conscience' doesn't permit me to do my job, maybe I'm in the wrong line of work? Would an Orthodox Jew take a job at Virgil's Barbecue and then refuse to serve the pork ribs?" Marty comments, "We'll let others enter the fray over what she points up. Discretion says: Sit back, and learn." Learn what, exactly? That abortion is a mandatory part of medicine that trumps conscience? That Catholic hospitals should not be permitted to follow their understanding of what is morally normative? At the risk of entering the fray, one may offer the suggestion that the voice of timidity sometimes sounds like discretion speaking.

■ *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* was a spectacular box office success, and that worries Jonah Goldberg of *National Review.* In the movie, the Grinch, the victim of a cruel childhood, is done wrong by the smug, uptight folk of Whoville. The original Grinch, according to Theodore Geisel (Dr. Seuss), was really bad. "The Grinch hated Christmas! The whole Christmas season! / Now, please don't ask why. No one quite knows the reason." Hollywood asked and answered: people were mean to him. This revisionism is part of a pattern, says Mr. Goldberg, that includes the treatment of the Devil himself. Starting in 1997, with *The Devil's Advocate* starring Al Pacino, there has been a stream of Devil movies, with over a dozen in the past year, including *Stigmata, The Ninth Gate,* and *Bedazzled.* "Virtually all these films make Lucifer either very cool or profoundly mechanical," writes Goldberg. In *End of Days* and *Bless the Child,* for instance, the protagonists fight and defeat the Dark Prince with handguns. James Bowman of the *American Spectator* observes that "It seems hardly worth the trouble to bring the Enemy of Mankind onto the stage at all if he is to be disposed of like a clumsy burglar." All of which makes Goldberg grateful for the rerelease of the 1973 movie *The Exorcist.* "No popular film in the last two decades treats the Devil with more seriousness or subtlety; indeed, it is stunning to watch the film today. We all remember the vomiting and head-spinning, but what stands out now in an age of special effects is the dialogue about the nature of good and evil, the Devil's aim to confuse the two, and the unreliability of modern science in clarifying the issue. Satan is not treated as someone or something that can be reduced to petty human motivations or simplistic ambitions or explanations. He is what he is: a mystery, the omnipresent tempter. He is the Devil without quotation marks."

■ So are the Irish going secular or not? To judge by their holding to central Catholic teachings and by Mass attendance, the answer is no. On the other hand, confidence in Church leaders has dropped dramatically in the last ten years. Such are the

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findings of a new study codirected by Father Andrew Greeley of the University of Chicago, who observes that the Irish are "irredeemably Catholic." Greeley has long been an opponent of secularization theories, and I have considerable sympathy for his position, but I think he overestimates the sustainability of religious belief and practice detached from institutional supports. Witness what has happened in Quebec and the Netherlands in the last thirty-plus years. Whether his position is warranted or not, Greeley offers a cheerful counterpoint to the usually doleful reports about Catholicism in today's Ireland. One may be permitted to hope it is not entirely unwarranted.

■ "We have to get this stuff paid for," said Dr. Herbert Benson at a Harvard Medical School conference on "Mainstreaming Spirituality: The Next Step." Wouldn't you know it, capitalism raises its ugly head again. In recent years there has been a dramatic growth in the number of studies demonstrating the mind/body connections between physical health and spiritual well-being. But there are big problems in getting health insurance plans to pay for spiritual care. The growing recognition of the role of the spirit and the Spirit in human flourishing—also evident in the encouragement of "faith-based" approaches in social programs—is encouraging. But, when it comes to "getting this stuff paid for," it would seem that some lines will have to be drawn. I expect we do not really want people filing insurance claims for a particularly effective sermon or stress relieved by going to confession. There is something less than edifying in the prospect of clergy, like lawyers, calculating billable hours. I know the "rational choice" theorists and other market champions of an economistic persuasion will dismiss my qualms as nothing more than a curmudgeonly refusal to face up to the realities of a changing world, but on this one I think I will stand athwart and say Stop.

■ Yes, the reader from Austin, Texas, is right, this space does have axes to grind. We try to grind them in interesting ways, so that the grinding does not become tedious, but grind we do. We keep returning, for instance, to the urgency of Christian mission to the nations, the mission *ad gentes*, as the tradition puts it. The *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, an ecumenical publication to which we have called attention before, devotes a special issue to Catholic evangelization, taking off from the huge World Mission Sunday in Rome at which John Paul II told seventy thousand participants from 124 nations, "The world cannot live without missionaries." In an overview of Catholic missions since Vatican Council II, Maryknoll Father William B. Frazier suggests that people are just catching on to the maxim of Protestant theologian Emil Brunner, "The Church exists by mission as fire exists by burning." Protestant missiologist Gerald H. Anderson is highly appreciative of what the Catholics are saying, and of what many are doing, as evident in the worldwide growth of the Catholic Church, but he has a question. "I have been puzzled by what appears to be the rather marginal and declining overall involvement in world mission of the Catholic Church in the United States. I have frequently asked myself, and some of my Catholic friends, why a church of some sixty-five million members and growing, and with such a strong tradition and official teaching about the essential missionary nature of the Church, does not have a more significant commitment, involvement, and participation in global mission." He observes, for instance, that only one diocesan seminary in the U.S. regularly offers courses in missiology, and even there no such course is required. He asked an archbishop why his seminary offered no course in missiology, to which the archbishop responded, "You have to understand that I have very little influence with the seminary faculty, and I have to be careful not to interfere with the curriculum." Anderson writes, "At that moment my Protestant preconception about the power of Catholic bishops was shattered." Anderson's point is that a vision of world mission is not only necessary for those who will be missionaries abroad, but also for parish clergy who can communicate that vision to their people here. It is a point well taken.

■ In the same issue of the *International Bulletin* is the annual statistical table on global mission, compiled by numbers-crunchers David B. Barrett and Todd M. Johnson. There are four major "ecclesiastical megablocs," they report. At present, there are somewhat over one billion Roman Catholics and it is anticipated there will be 1.3 billion in the year 2025. They count 215 million Orthodox and anticipate 252 million twenty-five years from now. Anglicans, who are declining in this country, are growing elsewhere. There are close to 80 million now, with 113 million anticipated in 2025. Other Protestants are 342 million now, with an expected 468 million in twenty-five years. There are two other "megablocs" of interest. "Marginal Christians" include Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, and others who are defined by one or both of these traits: they are non-Trinitarian or anti-Trinitarian; they claim to have a source of divine revelation in addition to the Bible. This group has 26 million adherents now and is expected to have 45 million by 2025. Another, and very rapidly growing, megabloc they call simply "independents." There are 385 million now (larger than the Protestant category)

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and they are expected to grow to 581 million in the next quarter century. The "independents" include over twenty thousand movements, networks, or new denominations, with most of them sharing the characteristic of having split away from some other church group. Many are gathered around charismatic leaders, some have borrowed liberally, and eccentrically, from Catholic ritual and teachings (especially in Africa), and all are emphatically "post-denominational" in spirit, even if they are, de facto, new denominations. Of the independents in the U.S., the largest is the Fullness/Praise Network, with six thousand churches and 3.3 million members. So there, in brief statistical compass, is the state of Christianity at the beginning of the millennium. "Go, therefore," the Lord said, and the apostles went. They could not have anticipated that it would come to this.

■ The *Burlington Free Press* of Vermont reports that atheists there find religious—most prefer the term "spiritual"—fellowship at the First Unitarian Universalist Society. Minister Gary Kowalski (a stray Polish Catholic, it would seem) says, "Our congregation welcomes all beliefs." In a survey of members' "religious orientation" (this orientation is apparently not in the genes), most identified themselves as humanists, while the second most popular choice was pagan. According to the report, "Becky Logan, fifty, of Monkton has been a devout Unitarian for fifteen years. She also is an atheist." Devout? The word is from *devovere*, to swear by or avow allegiance. By whom and to whom? one might ask. In the Letter to the Hebrews we are told that God swears by Himself, there being no higher authority. I expect it is much the same when we make ourselves our gods.

■ One can always quibble with schematizations of history, while acknowledging that they are inevitable and, at least sometimes, useful. Professor Ralph McInerny of Notre Dame writes that there have been three phases since the Second Vatican Council. He begins by invoking Newman on how it is the laity, as in the dark days of the Arian heresy, who keep the faith. "For I argue," wrote Newman, "that unless they had been catechized, as St. Hilary says, in the orthodox faith from the time of their baptism, they never could have had that horror which they show of the heterodox Arian doctrine. Their voice, then, is the voice of tradition." That postulate being put in place, McInerny says that the first twenty years after the Council were a time of liberal "triumphalism," of "tumult and dissent," all of which moved Pope Paul VI to remark that he detected the smoke of Satan within the Church. The second phase was launched with the publication of *The Ratzinger Report* in 1985, which set the agenda for the Extraordinary Synod of bishops in the same year, a synod that initiated work on the new Catechism. This phase also witnessed the birth of new lay-edited publications and other efforts supportive of orthodoxy, while the bishops still "pandered to theologians whose main skill seemed to be the manipulation of the secular media." The third phase began with the Jubilee Year of 2000, which brought to full expression the leadership of John Paul II, who "has dominated the post-conciliar period and put things in place for the belated flowering of the Council." Without detracting from McInerny's point about the crucial role of the laity (as Newman is said to have remarked to a fellow cleric, "We would look pretty silly without them"), it is worth noting that Ratzinger, John Paul II, the members of the Extraordinary Synod, and those who produced the new Catechism are, after all, bishops. As are a good many prelates in the U.S. today who can hardly be accused of pandering to the zeitgeist. But let McInerny have the last word: "When one recalls the optimism with which Pope John XXIII convened the Council and what can seem his mindless cheerfulness as it opened, the sequel may seem only ironic. But why should we imagine that John XXIII was thinking only of the present and immediate future? That wise and holy prelate served the Church of the future as well as the present, and John Paul II has carried his predecessor's hopes and aspirations to the third millennium. Now it can begin. And the main burden lies, as it always must, on the faithful, on the *Christifideles laici*."

■ Somebody has to maintain intellectual standards. Here is a review in the *New York Times* by Caleb Crain of the new translation of Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* (University of Chicago Press) by Harvey Mansfield and Delba Winthrop. Mr. Crain makes much of the fact that the translators, both of Harvard, "thank the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation and the John M. Olin Foundation, widely known for their support of the intellectual right wing." Try to imagine the *Times* indicting a book because it was funded by the MacArthur and Ford Foundations, "widely known for their support of the intellectual left wing." I suggest you not waste much time trying. Crain notes that Mansfield and Winthrop were hesitant about including a subject index. "We do this," they write, "somewhat against our inclination, as such an index may give a sense of false security to those users who are pressed for time." Mr. Crain seizes upon this evidence of blatant elitism: "That's how the rabble get in, you know—through the subject index." If I understand Mansfield and Winthrop, however, they want everybody to actually read Tocqueville, and not

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just skip and dip with the help of a subject index. In fact, I have it on good authority that they would not object if millions of Americans bought and read *Democracy in America*. In that unlikely event, Caleb Crain would undoubtedly decry the support of Bradley and Olin for right-wing populist rabble-rousing. Either way, if Bradley and Olin are for it, Mr. Crain is against it. In a time of collapsing intellectual standards, it is reassuring to encounter a thinker who adheres to enduring verities.

■ Dismissive is the word for Eric Michael Mazur's treatment of Stephen L. Carter's *The Dissent of the Governed: A Meditation on Law, Religion, and Loyalty*, reviewed in *Society*. Mazur teaches religion at Bucknell University and has written extensively on religion and public life. He quotes Carter, who identifies himself as "a legal theorist, as a citizen of a democracy, and as a Christian," and goes on to complain that those self-identifications are not equal since everyone knows what it means to be a legal theorist and a citizen "but the history of Christianity is filled with people specifically *not* agreeing on what it means to be a Christian." Really? Among Christians there has been, is, and undoubtedly always will be vigorous disagreement over what it means to be a true Christian, but is the disagreement any sharper than that between, say, Robert Bork and Alan Dershowitz over what it means to be a true legal theorist? They would surely excommunicate one another, were there such a thing as excommunication in the institution of law. And as for what it means to be "a citizen of a democracy," the entirety of our politics is continuing conflict, and sometimes reasonable debate, over what that should mean. This singling out of religion as being peculiarly contentious and conflictual is nothing more than a secularist prejudice. The daily news provides ample evidence of conflicts and disruptive contentions over law, politics, and ideology. Where in our society is there disruption over what it means to be a Christian? In a similar vein, the director of a recent foundation study on American religion remarks that there is a "paradox" in the fact that America is so very religious but, at the same time, so tolerant. Apparently it does not occur to her that Americans are tolerant because they are religious, believing, as they do, that tolerance is related to the command to love one's neighbors. Returning to Mazur, who writes, "Telling me that you oppose abortion because your God demands such a position is interesting but hardly compelling if I do not share your religious sensibilities. This is exactly the point missed by Carter, as well as in others' work (for example, Richard John Neuhaus in *The Naked Public Square*)." Permit me to suggest that it is Mazur who misses the point, indeed several points. First, religion is not merely a matter of "sensibilities." It is also a matter of truth claims that are eminently public and susceptible of reasonable argument. For instance, whether we live in a world ordered by "Nature and Nature's God" who has endowed persons with certain "inalienable rights." Such claims are at least as publicly debatable as are claims about economic equality, racial justice, and the desirability of same-sex marriage. To be sure, some Christians make nonrational and even irrational claims in public, invoking their own eccentric understanding of Divine authority. But are they any more irrational than people who insist that the law should ignore, for instance, the humanity of the unborn child? Citizens who contend that our polity should abide by the foundational truths expressed in, for example, the Declaration of Independence cannot be ruled out of order simply because those truths include encompassing claims that are commonly described as religious. Mazur writes that "convincing arguments in the public sphere require a greater attention to cross-cultural rhetoric," and he is right about that. That is required for reasons of political effectiveness, and also to maintain civil amiability. It is a requirement generally observed by Christians active in the political arena, at all points on the ideological spectrum. Stephen Carter's complaint is that such Christians are viewed as suspect (usually by liberal secularists) because, it is said, behind their "cross-cultural rhetoric" is a desire to see God's will done. And, of course, they do want that, as in "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." With the exception of a few marginal theonomists, as they are called, Christians do not expect that prayer to be answered fully short of the Eschaton, and certainly don't expect it to be answered through politics, although they have some hope that God's will might be more nearly approximated in aspects of public life and policy, or at least that hostility to God's will might be significantly tempered. Trying to do something about that is really a very modest program. The point of Stephen Carter and others is that that program should not be traduced—and it is widely traduced—as a violation of the civil compact. That is the point missed by, among many others, Eric Michael Mazur.

■ Critical theory is, in largest part, Marxism for Western academics. David Macey, author of *Penguin Dictionary of Critical Theory*, knows that after decades of dismal and bloody experiments with it most people have consigned Marxism to the dustbin of history. Nothing daunted, he writes: "Paradoxically, Marxism has always flourished best under non-Marxist regimes and the many variants of Western Marxism are much more sophisticated than anything developed in the

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'socialist' countries. . . . This suggests that Marxism may outlive the collapse of communism in the East." In other words, it's a great theory so long as you don't try to put it into practice. That's not paradoxical. It's self-indulgent silliness.

■ Some critics have said that James Hynes' new academic novel, *The Lecturer's Tale*, is a little over the top. Hynes writes this about a candidate for a tenured position at a distinguished department of English: "In a discipline where scholarly heft was defined by being more postcolonial than thou, Lester Antilles was the heftiest of the lot. As a graduate student at an Ivy League school he had announced to his dissertation committee that doctoral theses at major Western universities were a primary locus of the objectifying colonialist gaze on native subjects, and he refused on principle to participate in the marginalization of indigenous voices or to become complicit with the hegemonic discourse of Western postcolonial cultural imperialism. In practice, this meant that for six years he refused to take classes, attend seminars, or write a dissertation. As a result of this ideologically engaged nonparticipation, he was offered tenured positions even before he had his Ph.D. . . . Columbia won by offering him an endowed chair and a full professorship, and on Morningside Heights he courageously continued his principled refusal to teach any classes, hold any office hours, publish any books, serve on any committees, or supervise any dissertations. For this demanding and theoretically sophisticated subaltern intervention in the dominant discourse, Antilles made well into the six figures, more money than the President of the United States." Well, maybe that is a little over the top.

■ In the January issue, I had an extended reflection on the Orthodox theologian Father Alexander Schmemann, occasioned by the publication of his journals by St. Vladimir's Press. I remarked on the similarity between him and the Protestant theologian Karl Barth in the way they pitted authentic Christianity against the generic phenomenon called religion, but said that I did not know whether he had been influenced by Barth. Now Fr. Thomas Hopko, Schmemann's son-in-law and his successor at St. Vladimir's Seminary, tells me that Schmemann did indeed do extensive reading in Barth, although he is not sure how much he was influenced by him. Of course there are many theologians, past and present, who insist that the Christian gospel is the end of religion. If religion is understood as a human construct aimed at appeasing or manipulating the Divine, there is a great deal to that claim. Christ, it is said, is the radically new reality that explodes all the delusions of human religion. That is usually followed by the lament that the radically new reality is distorted by being domesticated within the conventions of Christian religion. I confess that I have always been ambivalent about that line of argument. "Domestic," after all, is from *domus*, Latin for house, and surely it is central to the Christian claim that God in Christ "came to his own home" and "became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth" (John 1). God inhabits the world as His house, thus making it our home. To be sure, it is our home on the way to home, which is our imperfect communion with God made perfect. Christianity practiced is Christianity domesticated, meaning that the grace of Christ embraces and transforms the everydayness of human existence. It is true that "domesticated" can also mean routinized and trivialized, and the gospel needs always to challenge potentially deadening habituation. So I understand what people intend when they pit Christianity against religion, but I do not think the idea should be pushed very far. In the final analysis, Christianity is on friendly terms with the domestic, the routine, the trivial, and the habitual, and its practice in everyday life inevitably looks like what most people mean by religion. In Christ, God stoops very low.

■ If we lose the word "marriage," David Blankenhorn writes, we lose marriage. But in some circles today, relationships are in, marriage is out. Blankenhorn of the Institute of American Values is commenting on a report issued by the Law Commission of Canada, tellingly titled, *Recognizing and Supporting Close Personal Relationships Between Adults*. He goes on to note that a study sponsored by his institute and demonstrating that school curricula today prefer "relationship" to "marriage" was discussed at a recent conference where it was candidly pointed out that local school officials around the country "will not accept course material that seems to endorse marriage." All of which is enough to drive Blankenhorn back to an earlier source of wisdom. "But they are wrong to suggest that marriage is simply one version, and quite possibly an inferior version, of a private relationship. To remind yourself of what marriage is, listen to Dietrich Bonhoeffer, writing to a young bride and groom from his prison cell in Nazi Germany in 1943: 'Your love is your own private possession, but marriage is more than something personal—it is a status, an office. Just as it is the crown, and not merely the rule, that makes the king, so it is marriage, and not merely your love for each other, that joins you together in the sight of God and man.' And then, about what does the elevating, this remarkable sentence: 'It is not your love that sustains the

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marriage, but from now on, the marriage that sustains your love.' I don't know how it could be said any better, and in today's marriage debate, I don't know of anything more important to say."

■ Britain has become the only country in the world officially to endorse human cloning and allow human embryos to be used as commercial medicinal products. Part of the debased public debate that led to this unhappy circumstance was a revival of raw religious bigotry. Journalist Matthew Parris got the ball rolling with a piece in the London *Times* titled "Declare Your Interests" and arguing that Christians, and Catholics in particular, should disqualify themselves from speaking to these questions since their religious beliefs precluded their having an objective judgment. The BBC, other media, and parliamentary debaters soon joined the game. "Are Catholics the New Jews?" asks an editorial in the *Catholic Herald*: "The game is not, of course, a new one, but it has now been given the official Parris seal of approval. Nice one, Matthew. Champion of antidiscrimination in matters of sexuality, you have now invented a nasty game which unleashes the ghosts of religious intolerance. Is there, perhaps, some identification badge you would like Catholics to wear?"

■ Here's an unusual advertisement: "CELEBRANTS for weddings at hotel churches, bridal halls, and restaurants. Ordained pastors welcomed. Experienced religious Christians are also acceptable. Daily Japanese conversation ability required." It's not all that unusual in Japan, however, where the ad appeared in *Japan Times*, the major English-language newspaper. Reader Charles de Wolf of Keio University sent it along, noting that over the thirty years he has been in Japan "Christian-style" weddings have become the norm, with family members and guests who have never been in a church stumbling over the Japanese version of "What a Friend We Have in Jesus." The ceremonies typically take place in "hotel churches," and it is preferred that the person dressed up as the pastor should be an Occidental male. An American priest friend who is a missionary in Japan puzzled a hotel manager by turning down the suggestion that, since he was a "professional" and already had his own "costume," he could make a lot of money presiding at such ceremonies. The fact that he, as an "experienced religious Christian," had some problems with the deal appeared to be quite beyond the manager's ken. Professor de Wolf adds, "The public square in secular Japan is not naked. It is filled with myriad monuments to the eclectic worship of kitsch."

■ I have lawyer friends who belong to that worthy organization, the Federalist Society, but I expect few of them would know what to make of a book called *Federal Husband*. Written by Douglas Wilson, it examines "covenant headship" in marriage and is part of an impressive theological publishing program in the Reformed tradition by Canon Press of Moscow, Idaho. Federal theology (from *foedus* or "covenant") is today little known outside certain Calvinist circles but played a major role in Puritan thought about salvation, holiness, and politics as well. For many of the writers and ratifiers of our Constitution, federal theology provided the theological and philosophical (the two being hardly separable) framework for understanding the American experiment in republican government, as it also played a significant part in John Locke's contractual model of polity. The almost total ignorance of this tradition contributes to the current deformations of political theory and jurisprudence. As for religious thought, evangelical Protestantism of an individualistic, experiential, revivalistic, and typically anti-intellectual bent has largely overwhelmed another stream of Reformed evangelicalism nurtured mainly in smaller Presbyterian groups. Among the many offerings of Canon Press is, for instance, *The End of All Things* by C. Jonathan Seraiah, a rigorous polemic against "preterism" (the teaching that the eschatological promises of the Bible have already been fulfilled) and the more radical form of preterism called "pantelism." One of the bracing things about rigorously orthodox Reformed theology is that it has a storehouse of heresies most Christians have never heard about or had the wit to commit. Such rigorism comes with the price of endless factions and schisms, of course, but it is understandable that some folk are willing to pay the price for an alternative to the flaccidity of popular religion that excludes clear thinking about theological truth. Of course, rigorist factionalism and feel-good latitudinarianism are not the only ways of being Christian, nor do I suggest that the people of Canon Press belong to the first camp. I do suggest that they are keeping alive an important tradition of Christian thought that should be better known than it is.

■ Be careful what you say about musical schlock in worship. People get very upset. A reader sends me a clipping from *Parade* with a photo of a young black man, long dreadlocks, electric guitar in hand. A member of a hip-hop noisemaking group, you think. But no, under the photo there is this: "My parents didn't want to lose me to the streets. So my mom got me a guitar to play in church. Suddenly, I found another avenue to channel my energy. I never stole again." So, the reader wants to know, am I against

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getting kids off the street? Not at all. But the point of our getting together is to worship God in the beauty of holiness, which is never to be equated with, but is not unrelated to, the holiness of beauty. Providing an alternative to juvenile delinquency is among myriad important things to do, but another time and another place, please.

■ Except for a few reviews such as Andrew Sullivan's in the *New York Times Book Review*, James Carroll's *Constantine's Sword* is taking an awful drubbing. And deservedly so. Our review in this issue makes points not made elsewhere, but already our Dan Moloney, writing in *National Review*, has highlighted historical and conceptual gaffes that wobble between the grotesque and hilarious. Elsewhere, in *Slate*, Katha Pollitt writes: "Carroll is welcome to rediscover—or invent—a form of Christianity that leaves out the parts he disapproves of, and is, in his view, closer to what he believes—or wishes—Jesus to have had in mind, although how he would know what that was is hard to say. But that religion would not be Catholicism. It might not even be recognizably Christian. It might even be . . . Judaism." Robert Louis Wilken, reviewing the book in *Commonweal*, makes the yet more incisive point that in the absence of the biblically demanding and often troublesome kind of religion that Carroll rejects, the world would be left without either Christians or Jews. I may be indulging in wishful thinking, but after Garry Wills' *Papal Sin* and John Cornwell's *Hitler's Pope*, the response to Carroll's *Constantine's Sword* suggests that the latest effluence of blockbuster books bashing Christianity, and Catholicism in particular, may be subsiding. Only for a time, of course.

■ A few years ago I commented favorably on the remarks of Archbishop Eden Curtiss of Omaha who suggested that what is commonly called the crisis of priestly vocations may be something else. He said, "It seems to me that the vocation 'crisis' is precipitated and continued by people who want to change the Church's agenda, by people who do not support orthodox candidates loyal to the magisterial teaching of the Pope and bishops, and by people who actually discourage viable candidates from seeking priesthood and vowed religious life as the Church defines these ministries." Now Michael S. Rose, who is writing a book on the subject, describes in the *Catholic World Report* the ways in which theological and psychological screening is used by some vocation directors and seminaries to weed out men who are excessively "rigid," which too often means that they agree with the Church's teaching on such questions as women's ordination, contraception, and homosexuality. Rose has done extensive interviewing with those who have left or were expelled from seminaries, and one must make allowances for some exaggeration in their horror stories. That being said, I and almost anybody who has interested himself in the questions raised by Archbishop Curtiss have heard many such stories from unimpeachable sources. There are refreshingly notable exceptions, but in diocese after diocese there are bishops who emphasize the need to prepare for a time of priestless parishes rather than the recruitment of priests. A large diocese in the East recently declared its shortage of priests to be a "crisis." The media reported its vocations director going on and on about how overworked and demoralized the priests of the diocese are. That's a great way to appeal to young men: Why would you want to give your life to manning a sinking ship? The lesson of dioceses such as Arlington, Peoria, Lincoln, and Denver, where vocations are flourishing, is that vibrant orthodoxy and an invitation to the high adventure of radical devotion attracts. The great sadness of the last several decades is not the drop in the number of priests. It is that so many whom Christ called were not encouraged in their readiness to follow. Many vocations flickered out, many were snuffed out. In the latter case, those responsible might well ponder the words of Jesus about the sin against the Holy Spirit (Mark 3:29).

■ On his last day in office, in what may have been his last official act, President Clinton signed a statement that was part of a deal whereby he paid a fine and accepted a five-year suspension of his right to practice law in return for not being indicted and standing trial for crimes committed as President. The statement included the following, which may serve as a coda for his presidency: "I tried to walk a line between acting lawfully and testifying falsely, but I now recognize that I did not fully accomplish this goal and that certain of my responses to questions about Ms. Lewinsky were false." Forget the Ms. Lewinsky part. Here is a statement, carefully vetted by Mr. Clinton and his lawyers, declaring that his "goal" was to avoid acting lawfully while, at the same time, avoiding the penalty for acting unlawfully. One can hardly imagine a more unvarnished acknowledgment of the mindset that created the most morally corrupt administration in American history. George Will is right in saying that, if he was not the worst President, he was the worst man ever to be President. It is an observation made with a measure of sadness, for as I wrote in "Clinton and the American Character" (FT, June/July 1999), at the time of his election in 1992 I held some modest hopes for his leadership, but soon after his inauguration it became apparent that, as I put it then, "we are witnessing a man stumbling through the rubble of a

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ruined presidency." The indisputable liberal bias of the establishment media notwithstanding, one is struck by what is now the bipartisan consensus in support of that judgment. His graceless exit from office and shameless efforts to make policy with last-minute executive orders reinforced that consensus. To be sure, there will be revisionist efforts to refurbish the Clinton "legacy," and it is fair to note that in some ways he moved the Democratic Party to the center, as, for instance, in his acquiescence in Republican proposals for welfare reform. But the above-cited coda encapsulates the legacy of a President who habitually betrayed his oath of office and debased almost everything he touched. I have never been among those who are aptly described as Clinton-haters, nor do I think his failure achieved the status of tragedy. He was a little boy, egotistical and petulant, with extraordinary gifts of manipulation. His unbridled appetite for attention ensures that he will not disappear from the public stage, but now that he has no official command upon our noticing, the kindest thing is to avert our eyes from the embarrassing spectacle.

■ Among more theologically conservative Protestants, one frequently encounters a declared determination to "keep faith" with the sixteenth-century reformers such as Luther, Calvin, or Zwingli. It is a matter of defending a tradition, including the tradition of positing *sola scriptura* (Scripture alone) against tradition. David C. Steinmetz, church historian at Duke Divinity School, discusses in *Theology Today,* the journal of Princeton Theological Seminary, the ironic twists by which a later Protestant identity became something very different from the self-understanding of the original reformers. By the middle of the sixteenth century, a permanent and self-perpetuating Protestant culture was developing. "The older ex-Catholic leadership of former priests, nuns, friars, and monks was slowly replaced by a new leadership that had never attended Mass, much less said one, and by a laity that had never confessed its sins to a priest, gone on pilgrimage, invoked patron saints, made a binding vow, or purchased an indulgence." In truth, some of the first generation did not think of themselves as ex-Catholics. It is probably the case, for instance, that when Philip Melanchthon, Luther's friend and chief aide, died in 1560 he understood himself to be a Catholic, despite what he viewed as the temporary rupture with Rome. Steinmetz nicely summarizes the general situation: "While Protestants continued to write anti-Catholic polemics, their treatises lacked the passion and sense of betrayal of the polemics written by the first generation. Protestants were permanent outsiders with their own fixed institutions, parishes, confessions, catechisms, and settled sense of identity. They harbored no illusions about reunion and felt no twinges of nostalgia for a church that had never been their home. Unlike their grandparents, they cherished no hope for an evangelical reformation of the Catholic Church and settled into a mode of permanent opposition. In all these respects, the third generation of Protestants differed from the first. The Reformation began as an argument among Catholic insiders; it continued as an argument between Catholics and former Catholics until well past the middle of the century. The transformation of a movement led by former Catholics into a movement led by traditional Protestants took two generations to effect. Unless we understand the Catholic background, context, and character of the early Protestant Reformation, we shall inevitably misunderstand it. Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, Hubmaier, Hooper, and Melanchthon were not Protestants in the way Voetius, Ames, Turrettini, Perkins, Wollebius, and Spener were. In the nature of the case, they could not be."

■ When you're going against the grain on so many issues as I am, there is a temptation to try to be conventionally correct on some issues, lest you be dismissed as a complete contrarian. For example, years ago I tried to pass the correctness test on what is called campaign finance reform. I failed miserably. I could not persuade myself that the solution to whatever is wrong with our political system is to give more control to politicians. I was also impressed by the fact that money has a slippery way of getting around obstacles to the purposes for which people want to spend it, with the result that every reform makes almost inevitable a subsequent reform of the reform. Most of all, however, was the implausibility of the idea that stifling free speech is the way to a more vibrant democracy. These and other concerns are brilliantly addressed by Bradley A. Smith in a book just out from Princeton University Press, *Unfree Speech: The Folly of Campaign Finance Reform.* Smith is a law professor and a member of the Federal Election Commission who knows of what he speaks and speaks it with wit and persuasiveness. On the complaint that too much money is spent on campaigns, for instance, he notes that we spend more on both potato chips and Barbie dolls. Campaign finance reform, he contends, is driven by obsessive reformers who cannot restrain their penchant for fixing what is not broken. His chief argument, however, is that such reforms simply cannot be squared with the First Amendment. Whether he convinces you or not, Smith offers a most enjoyable and instructive read. As to what to do about my contrarian reputation, I have signed a petition

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that forthrightly calls upon all of us to be much nicer to animals. At least my dog Sammy knows that I have a heart of gold.

■ As you may have heard, the Brooklyn Museum has done it again, provoking Mayor Giuliani to call for a commission on decency. First it was the "Sensation" exhibit with the black Madonna and clumps of elephant dung. Now it is *Yo Mama's Last Supper*, in which photographer Renee Cox poses her nude self standing in the place of Jesus. That very sensible art critic Hilton Kramer notes that "decency has now become a concept all but impossible to define in legal terms, and socially the need to give it a legal definition has to be seen as a sign that the idea itself has already been lost to our society as a widely observed voluntary moral imperative." Kramer thinks the mayor will likely lose in the courts, as he did in the "Sensation" episode, but maybe that's not so bad. "In assessing the mayor's call for decency standards, however, it is worth observing that even lost causes are not always entirely lost. They have been known to leave in their wake a significant moral residue that lives on to haunt the very institutions that appear to have succeeded in surviving the censure mounted against them." He cites the instance of the National Endowment for the Arts, which funded Robert Mapplethorpe's sex photographs and hijinks such as Karen Finley's "performance art" in smearing her nude self with chocolate, noting that today nobody takes the NEA seriously. Of course the *New York Times* led the pack in baying against the mayor's idea of a decency standard, claiming that it would imperil New York's reputation as an international art center. "If unfettered permissiveness was all that was required for the existence of a thriving international cultural center," Kramer observes, "Amsterdam would today be the arts capital of the universe." He concludes: "Artistic talents of every variety flock to New York today from all over the world because this is where ideas, money, opportunity, and creative energy—and yes, critical controversy, too—nowadays exist in greater abundance than anywhere else on earth. The truth is that art institutions like the Brooklyn Museum, which has abandoned rigorous artistic standards for short-term political and commercial advantage, pose a greater threat to New York's reputation as an arts capital than anything the Mayor of New York can say or do."

■ In a campaign that is barely distinguishable from extortion, Stuart E. Eizenstat, deputy treasury secretary in the Clinton Administration, succeeded in getting European banks and governments to cough up more than seven billion dollars as "restitution" for what they did or didn't do during World War II. While the rapidly diminishing number of Holocaust survivors may get a few thousand dollars each, the bulk of the money will go to fuel other enterprises of what is aptly termed the Holocaust industry. Here is an item in the *Times* reporting the campaign's success in discovering that the Library of Congress has 2,300 items, mostly books, periodicals, and other items in its Hebraic collection, that were obtained by American occupation forces in Europe. For some reason, this fails to evoke the frisson of horror that the report apparently intends. The holdings of the Library of Congress include thirty million books and millions of periodicals and other items, and it seems thoroughly unremarkable that a couple of thousand were received through occupation forces in Germany. One rather doubts that Mr. Eizenstat intends to track down magazine subscribers to deliver the issues they missed a half century ago. Yet the *Times* trumpets the achievements of his campaign, including the claim that one result is that some European nations "have begun teaching about the Holocaust era in schools." Presumably their textbooks skipped over World War II until Mr. Eizenstat brought the omission to their attention. One notes, once again, the world's indebtedness to the moral tutelage of America.

■ Mention nervousness about government funding for faith-based social services and, almost inevitably, Catholic Charities will be mentioned as a cautionary example. Catholic Charities is a huge enterprise predominantly supported by and tailored for government funding, and is therefore not very Catholic. That is the generalization that must be quickly qualified by noting that Catholic Charities can be very different from diocese to diocese. In a few places, it accepts no government money and the generalization does not hold at all; in other dioceses, leaders strive earnestly against letting government grants call all the plays, and the generalization holds only in part. But Catholic Charities is still thrown up as the example to be avoided. That is in part because the national voice is Catholic Charities USA, a Washington-based coordinating office, and its president, Father Fred Kammer, S.J. In an op-ed piece in the *Washington Post*, Fr. Kammer offers a painfully qualified endorsement for the Bush faith-based policy. One sentence says it all: "Catholic Charities' experience is that poverty has many and complex causes and that effective solutions come in many packages, including personal and social responsibility, individual and community empowerment, religious and secular social services, and attention to physical, mental, emotional, familial, systemic, and, at times, spiritual factors." There, in the jargon of social service policy wonkery, is the reason why seriously religious

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folk are nervous about their programs becoming, through dependence upon government, indistinguishable from secular enterprises for which "spiritual factors" are, or so it would seem, an afterthought.

■ Thomas Friedman is foreign affairs columnist for the *New York Times* and a great enthusiast of "globalization" as the way to world peace, also in the Middle East, as outlined in his 1989 book *From Beirut to Jerusalem*. Daniel Pipes, director of the Philadelphia-based Middle East Forum, has long been critical of Friedman's views, but is pleased that, with the collapse of the "peace process," he may have learned something. Friedman has written, "What troubles me most about the mood on the Arab street today is the hostility I detect there to modernization, globalization, democratization, and the information revolution." To which Pipes responds: "Why, he wonders, are Egyptians, Palestinians, and Iraqis unwilling to forgo political dreams for a nice apartment and a late-model car? The answer is simple. Arab hostility toward globalization was there all along but Friedman (along with Clinton) did not want to see it. He overlooked the Middle East's realities and instead imposed onto it an alien pattern. Sadder but wiser, Thomas Friedman is learning a deep truth about the Middle East. This is one region where politics trumps economics." To which one might add that it is politics driven by culture, and culture defined by religion—in this case Islam and the political exploitation of Islamic sentiment. What Friedman apparently does not realize, and Pipes realizes but does not mention, is that for many, if not most, Arabs, the State of Israel is a tool of the American-led resumption of the Christian crusades. That is among the sobering truths advanced by Samuel Huntington's thesis about the "clash of civilizations" that is dramatically reshaping our world.

■ In an editorial against President Bush's tax cut, the editors of *Commonweal* take issue with his statement, "The surplus belongs to the taxpayer, not to the government. Taxpayers know better than the government how to spend their money." To which the editors respond, "But do we?" It is obvious that the editors mean, "But do they?" since the editors make perfectly clear that they, the editors, know how the money should be spent. They go on to urge increased spending on international organizations, foreign aid, welfare, health care, and so forth. "In fact," they say, "taxpayers don't always know better how to spend their money, because they often can't see the larger picture or focus on what needs to be done." We may be grateful for editors who see the larger picture, while at the same time hoping that they might entertain the possibility that, when enough people learn to take care of their own little worlds, the larger picture will, for the most part, take care of itself.

■ In the November 2000 issue, we published *Dabru Emet* (Speak the Truth), a statement on Jewish views of Christianity signed by more than 170 rabbis and Jewish scholars. Edward Kessler, director of the Centre for Jewish-Christian Relations at Cambridge University says the statement may be the most important for Jewish-Christian relations since the Second Vatican Council's *Nostra Aetate* (In Our Time). He notes the long history of Christian hostility to Jews and Judaism, and why it is still difficult for many Jews to agree with the affirmations made in *Dabru Emet*. "Judaism reciprocated the contempt. Although there is little evidence of any *Adversus Christianos* tract, Christianity was dismissed as a religion practiced by morally and culturally inferior gentiles, based on unbelievable claims such as God-in-the-flesh, which had degenerated into idolatry. Three historical factors were the precursors to a change in attitudes: the Enlightenment, the Shoah or Holocaust, and the creation of the state of Israel." *Dabru Emet*, Kessler concludes, holds the promise of a different future: "It is likely that some Jews who oppose theological dialogue will simply resist or ignore the declaration. Others, whose residual Jewish memory triggers a knee-jerk reaction of fear and anger at Christianity, will also refuse to go along with its findings. Both these groups carry the unhealed wounds of the past two millennia. It is also possible that *Dabru Emet* will be abused by some Christian fundamentalists in order to advance their missionary efforts. Hopefully, however, the declaration's emphasis on a pluralist affirmation of Judaism's eternal covenant will be respected by even the more extreme Christian groups. Ironically, this affirmation of Christianity shows that Judaism's vitality is undiminished; it too can self-correct."

■ Science is a very good thing. The false religion of scientism is a very bad thing. Among the striking features of the latter is its pathetic grasping at straws to maintain its believability. Item: For more than a decade we have been subjected to the incessant media hype about the Human Genome Project. Materialists who subscribe to a billiard balls theory of causation have talked excitedly about finding and fixing a gene for this and a gene for that. Now the map of the genome is published and it turns out that the human being has fewer than was thought—slightly more than a mouse, about three times more than an ordinary house fly. So what makes the difference between a man and a mouse? Apparently the answer is not in the

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genes after all. Our daily paper's hyper-in-chief goes on and on about how scientists have now discovered that what produces the uniquely human is a multi-layered and complex interaction of dynamics among and between genes, and blah, blah, blah. In other words, they haven't the foggiest. What is man? The question is about where Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, and Aquinas found it. It's past time to rise above the superstitious delusions of materialistic scientism. What is needed is relentless, humble, hard-nosed, rational thinking about, for instance, the soul.

■ This whimsical item of anonymous authorship floated in on the e-mail. It purports to be a letter to Dr. Laura Schlessinger, a popular radio and television giver of advice. I publish it not to mock Dr. Schlessinger and certainly not to make light of scriptural authority, but as a reminder that the case against same-sex relations cannot be sustained by cherry-picking biblical passages but requires a considered understanding of human sexuality based on both natural law and revealed truth. In addition, it is quite funny.

Dear Dr. Laura:

Thank you for doing so much to educate people regarding God's Law. I have learned a great deal from your show, and I try to share that knowledge with as many people as I can. When someone tries to defend the homosexual lifestyle, for example, I simply remind them that Leviticus 18:22 clearly states it to be an abomination. End of debate.

I do need some advice from you, however, regarding some of the specific laws and how to follow them.

1. When I burn a bull on the altar as a sacrifice, I know it creates a pleasing odor for the Lord (Leviticus 1:9). The problem is my neighbors. They claim the odor is not pleasing to them. Should I smite them?

2. I would like to sell my daughter into slavery, as sanctioned in Exodus 21:7. In this day and age, what do you think would be a fair price for her?

3. I know that I am allowed no contact with a woman while she is in her period of menstrual uncleanliness (Leviticus 15:19-24). The problem is, how do I tell? I have tried asking, but most women take offense.

4. Leviticus 25:44 states that I may indeed possess slaves, both male and female, provided they are purchased from neighboring nations. A friend of mine claims that this applies to Mexicans, but not Canadians. Can you clarify? Why can't I own Canadians?

5. I have a neighbor who insists on working on the Sabbath. Exodus 35:2 clearly states he should be put to death. Am I morally obligated to kill him myself?

6. A friend of mine feels that even though eating shellfish is an abomination (Leviticus 11:10), it is a lesser abomination than homosexuality. I don't agree. Can you settle this?

7. Leviticus 21:20 states that I may not approach the altar of God if I have a defect in my sight. I have to admit that I wear reading glasses. Does my vision have to be 20/20, or is there some wiggle room here?

8. Most of my male friends get their hair trimmed, including the hair around their temples, even though this is expressly forbidden by Leviticus 19:27. How should they die?

9. I know from Leviticus 11:6-8 that touching the skin of a dead pig makes me unclean, but may I still play football if I wear gloves?

10. My uncle has a farm. He violates Leviticus 19:19 by planting two different crops in the same field, as does his wife by wearing garments made of two different kinds of thread (cotton/polyester blend). He also tends to curse and blaspheme a lot. Is it really necessary that we go to all the trouble of getting the whole town together to stone them? (Leviticus 24:10-16) Couldn't we just burn them to death at a private family affair like we do with people who sleep with their in-laws? (Leviticus 20:14)

I know you have studied these things extensively, so I am confident you can help. Thank you again for reminding us that God's word is eternal and unchanging. Your devoted disciple and adoring fan.

■ They had to call out the police at the University of Texas, Austin. Justice for All: Students for Bio-Ethical Justice had put up posters with photographs of aborted fetuses. A protest by about two hundred students and faculty, organized by International Socialist Organization, got a little rough. They called

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the display "offensive and grotesque." Exactly right. What was displayed, that is.

■ Oh boy. Here's a scorching letter from a reader offended by James Nuechterlein's description (March 2001) of a service marking the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. It was held in a Catholic church and Nuechterlein said the liturgical and musical goings on were, among other things, "jarring," "strained," "unsingable," and "inane." The reader accuses him of "mocking" the Catholic Church. Not at all. Many practices in contemporary worship, and not only Catholic practices, fully warrant those adjectives and more. What should have offended the reader was Nuechterlein's suggestion in his column, titled "Ecumenical Conundrums," that the Catholic Church has no proposal for advancing Christian unity other than to say everybody else should return to Rome. About that he is quite wrong. But that's a subject for another day.

■ Here is the bulletin of St. Nicholas Church, a Catholic parish in Evanston, Illinois, declaring that "there are all kinds of ways to fulfill the Lenten obligations to fast, pray, and give alms." The ways recommended, however, do not include fasting or prayer, although there is perhaps an extenuated version of giving alms. There is no reference to the passion and death of Christ or to Lent as preparation for the Pasch. So how are the faithful to fulfill their Lenten obligations? According to St. Nicholas: by working to abolish the death penalty, by increasing state control over medical care, by protesting the School of the Americas (now called the Hemisphere Institute for Security and Cooperation), by opposing sanctions against Iraq, and by fighting against Bush's proposal for a missile defense program. So why bother mentioning this? Because a good many people seem to think that the legendary "Church of What's Happening Now" is a thing of the past. St. Nicholas is a useful reminder that where we have been is where many local churches, Catholic and Protestant, still are.

■ When former President Bill Clinton tried to explain in a *New York Times* op-ed piece why he pardoned Marc Rich, he gave a bundle of reasons that amounted to his saying that the American criminal justice system could not be trusted to treat the fugitive financier fairly; and he offered a final reason, pressure from Israel and its supporters. In other words, "The Jews made me do it." And, indeed, the agitation of prominent Jewish leaders for the pardon has become a major embarrassment. Rabbi Eric Yoffie, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, issued a strong reproach: "We should be ashamed of ourselves: we have undermined our community's moral fabric, jeopardized our political standing, disillusioned our youth, and compromised the sacred values of our tradition. In short, the moral stain of this sordid affair has begun to engulf us." Leon Wieseltier writes in the *New Republic*, "Are there Jews anywhere who have not taken some of Marc Rich's money to the bank? If so, it was an oversight." He then gives Mr. Rich's address so that they can request a handout and adds, "So many Jews, so little time." He cites Jewish testimonials to Rich, observing that "none of them allude to the financier's illegal business with states that are consecrated to the extermination of the Jewish state." Also with Clinton, Elliott Abrams of the Ethics and Public Policy Center writes, Jews made the big mistake of thinking they could get what they want by bankrolling Democrats. He draws this lesson from the Marc Rich debacle: "The Jewish community cannot afford the errors of the Rich case, nor can it afford a leadership that is in many ways inferior to what it was one hundred years ago. At that time, the community, with all its troubles, was vibrant with growth and immigration. Today it is a smaller and declining piece of American demography, its size steadily reduced by intermarriage and assimilation. Whatever the Jewish community's fortunes in the financial sense, its political standing is precarious and its influence will be difficult to maintain over the coming decades. The embarrassments connected with the Clinton pardons are a price worth paying if they alert the Jewish community to that fact and to the new political approaches it requires."

■ The story began with the *Boston Herald* and then went out over the wires all over the world. Little Jenny Richardson of Natick, Massachusetts, has Celiac Disease and cannot eat wheat. She was getting ready for First Communion and her parents offered to provide a wafer made of rice flour that could be consecrated just for Jenny. Her pastor said this was not possible and was backed up by a pastorally patient explanation from the archdiocese indicating why the Church cannot change the elements of the sacrament as instituted by Christ. She could, it was suggested, receive just the consecrated wine in which, according to Catholic teaching, Christ is present whole and entire. This was unacceptable to the family, which left for a Protestant church that is more accommodating in matters sacramental. A chorus of pundits joined the *Herald* in excoriating the Catholic Church for its insensitive ways. Rabbi Jacob Neusner, in an article to appear in a forthcoming issue of the British *New Blackfriars*, came to the defense of the Church, explaining why Jewish tradition agrees with the

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Church on "the logic that requires for the dough-offering given to the priests, and for the matzo eaten at the Passover Seder [which provides the context of the Christian eucharist], bread made of a grain that participates in the processes of fermentation, that is to say, life." What a fuss little Jenny and her parents stirred, highlighting how difficult it is in a consumer culture for people to understand that the Church is under Divine command and not in the business of offering a product that can be tailored to demand. The sad oddity of the affair is that it all began with the parents' worry that Jenny would feel "different" if she did not receive the host along with the other children in her First Communion class. The result is that they made her the object of worldwide attention over not wanting attention drawn to her difference. One suspects that Jenny would just as soon have achieved her fifteen minutes of fame in some other way.

■ Whatever your feelings may be about the abortion of more than a million children each year, the bright side is that, all in all, the right children are being killed. That's the finding of a Stanford Law School paper by John J. Donohue III and Steven D. Levitt, published in the *Quarterly Journal of Economics*. "Our results suggest that an increase of one hundred abortions per one thousand live births reduces a cohort's crime by roughly 10 percent," the authors report. "These estimates suggest that legalized abortion is a primary explanation of the large drops in murder, property crime, and violent crime that our nation has experienced over the last decade. Indeed, legalized abortion may account for as much as one-half of the overall crime reduction." At the same time the prison population rose by 50 percent. "Thus, together abortion and prison growth explain much, if not all, of the decrease in crime." Moreover, "the social benefit to reduced crime as a result of abortion may be on the order of $30 billion annually." Things look even rosier for the future. "Our results suggest that all else equal, legalized abortion will account for persistent declines of 1 percent a year in crime over the next two decades." If, however, there are restrictions placed on abortion, "this prediction might be overly optimistic." While legalized abortion has had "relatively modest" effects on the fertility of white women, the good news is that "black women who were exposed to abortion reforms experienced large reductions in teen fertility and teen out-of-wedlock fertility." In addition, "the marginal children who were not born as a result of abortion legalization would have systematically been born into less favorable circumstances if the pregnancies had not been terminated." They would, for instance, have been much more likely to live in poverty, have only one parent, collect welfare, and, of course, commit crimes. So it seems the abortion regime is very effectively targeting unwanted and burdensome African-Americans, although the long and assiduously documented paper does not say whether we are doing as well with Hispanics. Nonetheless, many children in the crime-prone "cohorts" are not being aborted, and prisons are expensive. Clearly, the preventive policy of choice is to kill them early. The authors write: "While falling crime rates are no doubt a positive development, our drawing a link between falling crime and legalized abortion should not be misinterpreted as either an endorsement of abortion or a call for intervention by the state in the fertility decisions of women." Of course not. They're simply reporting the good news and offering their "optimistic" assessment for the future. By a utilitarian calculation of social costs, aborting the poor is a bargain. The authors acknowledge that equivalent benefits might be obtained by alternatives to abortion, such as "providing better environments for those children at greatest risk for future crime." But that would be terribly expensive, and the last thirty years of wars on poverty demonstrate that we don't know how to do it very well, whereas abortion is quick, cheap, and, most important, certain. Children who have no future are not at risk, and cannot put us at risk, of future crime. While one sympathizes with the authors' reluctance to call for state intervention in the fertility decisions of women, there is still a very large number of children in the crime-prone cohorts—disproportionately composed of poor, black, and Hispanic males—who are getting through. One looks forward to future public policy contributions by Professors Donohue and Levitt, perhaps drawing on the thought of Jonathan Swift and with the active collaboration of innovative thinkers such as Peter Singer of Princeton. A society of historically unprecedented tranquillity may be within reach if we do not let moral fastidiousness get in the way of our willing the means to that end. With our current capacity for sex-selection it should be possible to target male children for terminal measures (see Exodus 1:16).

■ Marvin Olasky of *World* quotes the great G. K. Chesterton on how you know if a creed is true. GKC said, "If a key fits a lock, you know it is the right key." To which Olasky adds that "atheists who complain about the key are often most angry at the existence of locks."

■ Today's charlatan is tomorrow's pioneer. In *"Quote . . . Unquote"* I found this: "From the astrologer came the astronomer, from the alchemist the chemist, from the mesmerist the experimental psychologist. The

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quack of yesterday is the professor of tomorrow." I had heard it many years ago in this form: "From astrology came astronomy, from magic came medicine, from alchemy came chemistry. What, do you suppose, will ever come from economics?" It is adaptable to whatever quackery you disfavor. Experimental psychology, for instance.

■ A medieval monk, it is said, worked all day on a manuscript, finally writing in the margin, *Nunc scripsi totum, pro Christo da mihi potum*—I have now written everything, for the sake of Christ give me a drink. That I was told by an author whom I invited over for a drink at the house when he delivered his article. It may be true. At the end of some days it is certainly apt.

■ Geoffrey Hill has been called the greatest British poet of our time, and some would extend that to the English-speaking world. Upon receiving the T. S. Eliot Prize at Belmont Abbey College in North Carolina last September, he had this to say: "I observed at the start of this talk that whereas my approach to the making of a poem remains, now that I am sixty-eight, essentially the same as it was when I was twenty, nonetheless, in some respects, it has changed radically. I was close enough to Eliot to believe that—and I know now that I wasn't reading him aright—if any residue of the author's personality could be detected in the finished poem, this was to be accounted a dangerous, possibly fatal, flaw in the work. I see now how the extreme form of my misapprehension was little better than a variety of obsessive-compulsive disorder, a source of writer's block, and as demoralizing as a five-hundred miles round-trip to check whether you have left the stove on. While still deploring as strongly as ever the prevalent notion that self-expression issues from the supposedly authentic self like ectoplasm at a seance, I now entirely accept that the flawed self will, indeed must, be embodied in some way in the finished work; and, further, I now concede that the all-consuming desire to achieve the flawless object may itself be evidence of a more drastic flaw, a fall into gnosticism. Since these particular terms take us into the domain of theology, it may be worth adding that anyone who, as I do, accepts the full implications of John Henry Newman's allusion to the 'aboriginal calamity' infecting even the noblest instances of human nature, is bound to understand the religious dimension of his or her work in such a sense. The great work, even, will be greatly flawed: a sign of its humanity. One would not wish *Paradise Lost* to be other than it is. Language engages our fallibility at the heart of our greatest achievement."

■ "I don't know how I knew what I thought before I started reading FIRST THINGS," writes a college student from Virginia. That's intended as a compliment, but it is also a bit worrying. Not that we're above trying to persuade people what to think, mind you. But we would like to think that our purpose is to provide good company for people who want to think for themselves with others. Admittedly, the distinction is a delicate one, but it is important. We will be happy to send a sample issue of this journal to people you think are likely subscribers. Please send names and addresses to FIRST THINGS, 156 Fifth Avenue, Suite 400, New York, New York, 10010 (or e-mail to subscriberservices@pma-inc.net). On the other hand, if they're ready to subscribe, call toll free 1-877-905-9920, or visit www.firstthings.com.

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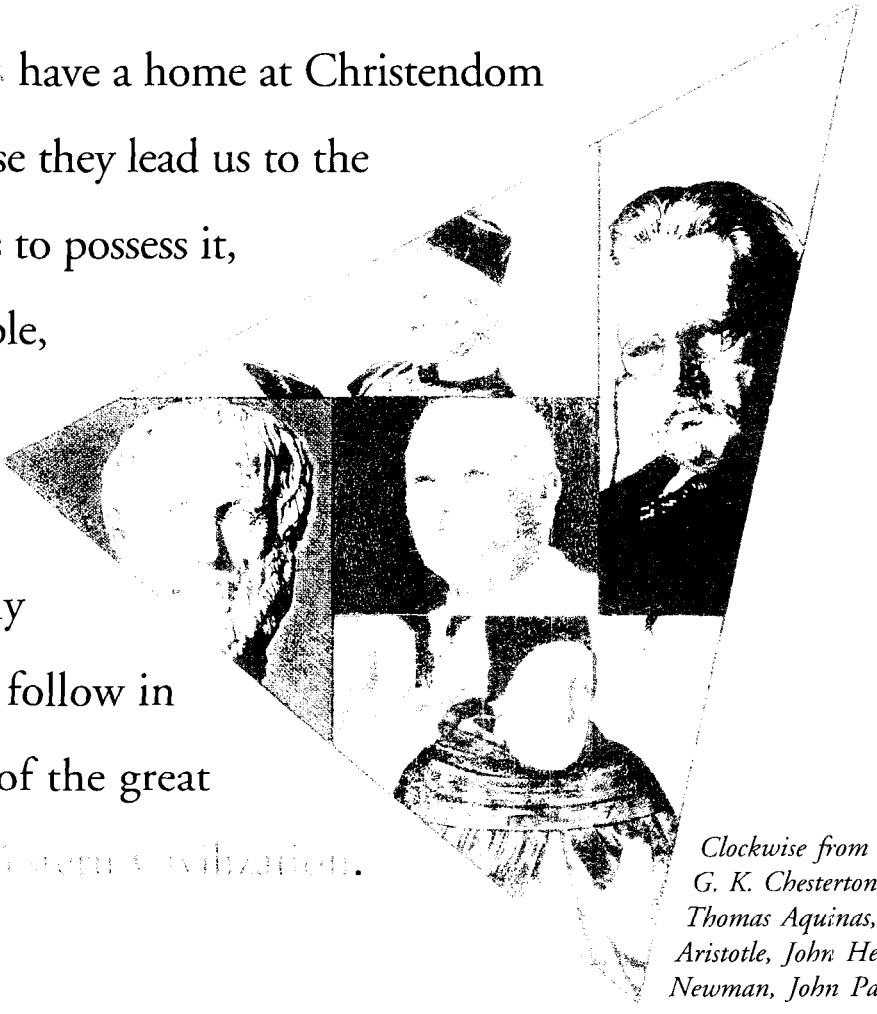

Clockwise from top right: G. K. Chesterton, Thomas Aquinas, Aristotle, John Henry Newman, John Paul II

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